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# MEMOIR

OF

# JOHN CHARLES

# VISCOUNT ALTHORP

## THIRD EARL SPENCER

# MEMOIR

OF

# JOHN CHARLES

# VISCOUNT ALTHORP

## THIRD EARL SPENCER

BY THE LATE

SIR DENIS LE MARCHANT, BART.

Edited by [illegible]

LONDON:
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# PREFACE.

THIS Memoir of Lord Althorp was undertaken by my Father, who had been long and intimately acquainted with him, at the request of (Frederick) Lord Spencer, whom he assured that it was "a labour of love to in any way assist in doing honour to his brother's memory."

My Father's object was to place on record a full and impartial account of Lord Althorp's life and character, as they appeared to one who had full opportunities of judging him, with such notice of his time and contemporaries as might tend to give a clearer impression of the circumstances by which he was surrounded.

Many causes combined to delay the progress of the Memoir, and the two closing chapters were still written only in part at the time of my Father's death, in the month of October, 1874. Feeling, as I did, most unwilling that his work should pass into other hands, I took upon myself, with the

aid of other members of my family, the care of arranging and completing that portion which remained unfinished. Although I am mainly responsible for the form of those chapters, whatever merit their substance may possess belongs entirely to my Father; my sole qualification for the task of editor consisting in the fact that during the later years of his life he conversed much and unreservedly with me on the subject of the Memoir, so that I am fully acquainted with the views he held of the events there related.

In these pages are detailed the circumstances which led to Lord Grey's retirement from office; and as the part which Lord Althorp played in them has been made a subject of comment, my Father thought it very desirable that a fair statement of the facts should be laid before the public, in order to furnish them with the necessary materials for appreciating his conduct.

Since I undertook the duties of editor, additional matter of much interest (chiefly letters to and from Lord Althorp) has been brought to my notice, and it is intended that the present volume should be followed at no distant period by another, containing selections from his correspondence and papers.

I should add that this biography was originally

only intended for private circulation among the members of Lord Althorp's family, in whose eyes the records of his early years and youthful companions, though not perhaps devoid of general interest, would naturally possess an especial value.

The information supplied by many of the notes I owe to the recollection of Lord Belper, who sat in the House of Commons throughout the official career of Lord Althorp, and warmly supported him in all his Liberal views.

I am also greatly indebted to Lord Lyttelton,* in whose hands the Memoir was placed shortly after my Father's death, for many corrections and suggestions to which his relationship and close intimacy with Lord Althorp give the highest authority.

It only remains to state that the notes by my Father and myself are distinguished by the words Author and Editor respectively—all others by the names of the various writers.

HENRY D. LE MARCHANT.

LONDON, *April*, 1876.

* I deeply regret that the death of Lord Lyttelton while these sheets were in the press, has prevented my having an opportunity of expressing to him my gratitude for his warm interest in the work, and constant assistance towards its completion.

# CONTENTS.

PAGE

Fragment of Earl Spencer's Life . . . . . xv

## CHAPTER I.

John, first Earl Spencer—Marries Miss Poyntz—Character of Lady Spencer. Her death in 1814—George John, second Earl Spencer—Educated by Sir William Jones—Joins the Tory Party—Becomes Lord Privy Seal—Afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty—Success of his Naval Administration—Resigns on the Catholic Question—Secretary to the Home Department—Pursuits in his Retirement—Marriage with Miss Bingham—Her character—Her contemporaries.—(Mr. Thomas Grenville.—The Earl of Essex, *notes.*) . . . 1

## CHAPTER II.

Birth of John Charles, Viscount Althorp—Early education—Letters from Harrow to his Father . . . . . 29

## CHAPTER III.

Companions at Harrow—Hon. Frederick Robinson—Viscount Duncannon—Lord De Mauley—Hon. Frederick Ponsonby—Viscount Royston—Charles Pepys (afterwards Earl of Cottenham)—Harrow Speeches—Leaves Harrow . . . . 43

## CHAPTER IV.

Lord Althorp goes up to Trinity College, Cambridge—Mr. Allen, his private Tutor—College examinations—Is placed in the first class in his first year—Is first man of his year in his second year . . . . . 72

## CHAPTER V.

PAGE

Love of hunting and racing—Travels in France and Italy—Returned for Okehampton—Candidate for the University of Cambridge—Is defeated—Commissioner for the Treasury—Returned for St. Albans—Then for Northamptonshire—Break-up of the Whig Government—Retirement of Lord Spencer from politics . . . . . 83

## CHAPTER VI.

Proceedings against the Duke of York—Part taken by Colonel Wardle and Mr. Whitbread—Excitement throughout the country—Lord Althorp's conviction of the justice of the accusations—He joins the minority opposed to the Duke of York—Defeat of Colonel Wardle's motion and of Mr. Bankes' amendment—Resignation of the Duke of York—Resolution brought forward by Lord Althorp—His maiden speech—Resolution carried—Remarks on the Duke of York—Letters from Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer during the proceedings—Reasons for his joining the Whig Party . . . . . 92

## CHAPTER VII.

Lord Althorp forms Liberal connections—Mr. Whitbread—Viscount Folkestone (Earl of Radnor)—Lord Archibald Hamilton—Sir Francis Burdett—Radical Party . . . . . 113

## CHAPTER VIII.

Motion for Committee of Inquiry brought forward by Lord Folkestone—Motion defeated by large majority—The Whig Party splits into two sections—Reaction in the country in favour of the Government—The Duke of York reinstated at the Horse Guards—Vote of censure brought forward by Lord Milton—Its defeat—The Leather Duty—Speeches by Mr. Brougham and Lord Althorp—Peace Preservation Bill—Athletic Exercises—The Pytchley Hunt . . . . 124

## CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

Lord Althorp's marriage with Miss Acklom—Character and description of Lady Althorp—Brothers and sisters of Lord Althorp—Residence at Wiseton Hall . . . . . 148

## CHAPTER X.

Death of Mr. Whitbread—Disturbances throughout the country—Lord Althorp strongly opposes the Ministerial measures—Dissolution of Parliament—Confinement and death of Lady Althorp—Grief of Lord Althorp—Seclusion at Wiseton—(Mr. Whitbread, *note*) . . . . . 162

## CHAPTER XI.

Lord Althorp re-elected for Northamptonshire — Insolvent Debtors' Bill—Passes the Commons—Thrown out in the Lords—Lord Althorp takes chambers in the Albany—His diligence in attending the House—Brings forward Bill for recovery of small debts—The Bill withdrawn . . . . 181

## CHAPTER XII.

Disturbances at Manchester—Proceedings in Parliament—Accession of George IV.—Death of the Queen—Revival of trade—Distress in the agricultural districts—Committee on the Corn Laws—The Report—Prorogation of Parliament . 196

## CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Canning—His Policy—Distrusted by Lord Althorp—Debates on Spain and on Ireland—Mr. Huskisson's Policy—Lord Althorp's position—Lord Liverpool's illness—The Coalition—Lord Goderich forms a Government—Lord Althorp named Chairman of the Finance Committee—Dissolution of Lord Goderich's Government—The Duke of Wellington Premier—Speeches on Economical Reform—Mr. Poulett Thomson—Lord Althorp Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons—Accession of William IV.—Dissolution of Parliament—Lord Althorp returned without opposition—Interest

# MEMOIR

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86

## CHAPTER XXII.

PAGE

Meeting of Parliament—Committee of Enquiry—Mr. Sheil and Mr. O'Connell—The Budget—The Church Rates Bill—The Poor Law Bill—General support given by the Tories to the Poor Law Bill—Mr. Ward's motion against the Irish Church—Resignation of Mr. Stanley and Sir James Graham—Adjournment of Mr. Ward's motion—New appointments in the Cabinet—Renewed debates on the Irish Church Bill—The Appropriation Question—The Irish Coercion Bill—Mr. Littleton's communication with Lord Wellesley—Lord Wellesley writes that the clauses for the prohibition of public meetings are unnecessary—Lord Althorp's opinion that the clauses must be given up—Mr. Littleton's conversation with Mr. O'Connell—Lord Althorp is overruled in the Cabinet—He declines to propose the clauses—He afterwards withdraws his resignation—Irish Coercion Bill read the first time in the Lords—Debate in the Commons—Tender of resignation by Mr. Littleton—It is not accepted—Speech by Lord Althorp—Resignation of Lord Althorp—Resignation of Lord Grey—Dissolution of the Government—Remarks on conduct of Lord Althorp and of Mr. Littleton—Address to Lord Althorp—Lord Melbourne becomes Premier—Lord Althorp and Mr. Littleton return to office—Coercion Bill carried—Prorogation of Parliament—Lord Brougham's tour in Scotland—Death of Lord Spencer—The King dismisses the Government—Lord Althorp's final retirement from office . 477

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Retirement of Lord Althorp from political life—The election of the Speaker—Lord Spencer urged by his friends to return to politics—Mr. Abercromby elected—Dissolution of the Tory Government—Refusal of Lord Spencer to take office—Interest in country pursuits at Althorp and Wiseton—The Royal Agricultural Society—Correspondence on agricultural subjects — Philosophical studies — Correspondence with former colleagues—Receives the offer of Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland—Moves the Address at the opening of the new Parliament in 1841— Proposes the Repeal of the Corn Laws—Sensation throughout the country—Farming pursuits—Lord Spencer's Speech on the Maynooth Bill—Is seized with illness during the Doncaster Races — His death—Character . . . . . 527

# THE LIFE OF EARL SPENCER.

## WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

(A FRAGMENT.)

[THIS fragment from Lord Althorp's own pen was discovered among his papers, without date, and ending abruptly; it is given here exactly as it was found.

From internal evidence it must have been composed in the winter of 1834-5. The writer survived that time more than ten years, and it would seem most unlikely that, with ample leisure, he should have at once and finally dropped a work which from his deliberate character he would not hastily have undertaken; but the most careful search has failed to bring any more of it to light.]

I have long known, and often endeavoured to impress upon my mind, that there is only one object which is worthy of the ambition of a man of sense, and that is, to obtain the favour of God. Political pursuits and political rivalships are not the means to conduce to this end. I do not say that politicians may not obtain the favour of God; on the contrary, I am confident that many of them have,

and many of them will continue to do so: but the occupations and the compliances which necessarily belong to a political man must, at least as far as my experience teaches me, have a tendency to diminish religious feelings. Notwithstanding my conviction of this truth, I know myself well enough to be aware, that, however thoroughly my reason is convinced that the only object I ought to have in view is to secure my eternal happiness, yet if ambition had been one of the passions which had much influence on my conduct, my mind is not yet sufficiently imbued with religion, to induce me to sacrifice ambitious pursuits, for the reason which I have stated: I retire from political life, from my own inclination only. But it is satisfactory to me firmly to believe and to be convinced, that by so doing I give myself greater facilities to become a religious man, than I should have possessed, had I continued to be in the new situation in which I was placed, as an active political partisan.

I am told I shall feel the want of political excitement, and be unable to find employment for my time. I do not think those who tell me this, know my character; I believe that the pursuits which I followed in my country life, before I came into office, would be sufficient for my happiness now. But a part of the year was then occupied by my attendance in the House of Commons, and I think, therefore, it will be prudent for me to add to my former pursuits, literary occupation. I am aware that the deficiencies of my education, and the habits of all my past life, are impediments which I must overcome. In adopting this course, reading alone will not be sufficient; it will be necessary for me to write, as well as to read. The difficulty I have to overcome here, is that there are no subjects on which I can fancy that I possess more information than other people. No original composition of mine, therefore, on any literary, political, or historical topic could instruct others, or satisfy

myself; and, secondly, I have no habit of composition, I have no practice in putting sentences together, and even, therefore, if I did possess the requisite information, I should not be able to convey it in a way which would induce the public to read what I had written. But I have lived, at least it appears to me, in times which must hereafter be most important in the history of England. I have been, more or less actively, engaged in politics more than thirty years. Even before I was engaged myself, I passed my boyhood at the Admiralty, during my father's brilliant administration of the Naval department: I was acquainted with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; and ever since their deaths I have been on the most intimate terms with all the leaders of the Whig party. I therefore think, that in putting on paper my own recollections of my past life, notwithstanding the defects in my style of writing, and the want of general information which may frequently appear in this composition, I am doing that which will be interesting to posterity.

My intention is to write down literally my own recollections. I have kept no memoranda to which I could refer; and though I shall make use of my father's correspondence which he preserved, and of the few letters which I have preserved myself, where I think it desirable to do so, yet the main part, and almost the whole, of this work will consist of what I remember myself. I probably, therefore, shall frequently be inaccurate as to dates; sometimes even, but not often, my recollection may deceive me as to facts themselves; and it may also sometimes happen, that I may confound the impression which the event made upon me at a subsequent period, with that which it made upon me at the time when it occurred. But in the main, the information which I shall give will be authentic: it will be the testimony of an eye-witness, and I am determined it shall be honest. I intend to state, without any reserve, my

opinion of the characters and motives of those whose actions will be brought under view; and among others I shall most unreservedly state my opinion of myself, and avow all the motives, as far as I know them, which have operated on my conduct. In doing this, I shall endeavour to divest myself of all partiality, and I hope that the temper of my mind is such, that I am not likely to put a worse construction upon the motives of others, than their apparent conduct requires. I shall begin with my earliest recollections. These, of course, will apply to a period of my life which can be but little interesting; but even this may be useful, as it will lead to a better appreciation of my own character, and may, perhaps, point out why it has been that a man without education, and possessed of such very slender natural abilities, should have risen to such high eminence as I have, and should have possessed the power, which, up to the period of my quitting the House of Commons, it was my fate to enjoy.

Before I begin to state my own recollections, it will be desirable that I should say something of those from whom I sprang, as far as my observation in later times has enabled me to judge of them.

My grandfather, Lord Spencer, died before I was one year old. I have, therefore, no recollection of him myself, but I have necessarily heard him described by others. My father, however, never said anything to me about his character, from which I could form any judgment of what his opinion of him really was; and his opinion was the only one on which I should have been inclined to place any reliance. Lady Jones, who knew my grandfather very well, told me once, that he was the noblest man that ever existed. She was a woman of very strong understanding, inclined undoubtedly to criticise rather than to praise others; and therefore her opinion, when expressing such praise as this, would have been of great value, if her temper had not been

such, as might have induced her to praise my grandfather, for the purpose of depreciating my father, if, at the time she spoke, he had given her any cause of offence.* My mother has also told me that my grandfather's manners, when he wished to please, were so fascinating that it was scarcely possible to resist his influence; at the same time, she mentioned many instances which proved that he had no command of temper whatever. From what indeed is notorious, he must have been a man who never put any restraint upon himself. He succeeded to an enormous property in money, as well as land, before he was of age; and he died at forty-nine years old, very much in debt. He spent extravagantly large sums in contested elections, and endeavoured to obtain great parliamentary influence, without, as far as I am aware, ever having been at all eager as a politician; and he played very deep. I believe that he was a man of generous and amiable disposition, spoiled by having been placed, at too early a period of his life, in the possession of what then appeared to him inexhaustible wealth; and irritable in his temper, partly from the pride which this circumstance had produced, and partly from almost continued bad health. Whether he was a religious man or not, I do not know; but it is clear, from the total absence of all self-command

* Lady Jones, with some peculiarities, had a warm heart; as those who knew her, even in her old age, can testify. Her sense of the obligations which Sir William Jones had received from Lord Spencer probably coloured the view she took of his character. Sir William was certainly deeply attached to him. He says in one of his letters: "I rejoice with the truest sincerity that his lordship's health is so likely to be re-established; for I cannot name a man of rank in the nation, in whose health the public and all mankind, as well as his family and friends, are more truly interested." (Lord Teignmouth's "Life of Sir William Jones," 219.) Granting due allowance for the fact that this letter was addressed to Lady Spencer, the expressions are entitled to great consideration; for Sir William Jones was no flatterer, and his letters breathe a spirit of independence highly honourable to his character.—AUTHOR.

which was exhibited in his conduct, that the true principles of Christianity could not have entered fully into his mind.

I knew my grandmother, Lady Spencer, very well, and I think I can form a true estimate of her character; but I am aware that, from the circumstance of my mother never having liked her, my estimate will probably be more unfavourable than it ought. She was a woman who did not possess naturally any quickness of understanding, nor do I think that she possessed sterling good sense; but she had taken great pains with herself, had read a great deal, and though herself far from brilliant in conversation, had lived in the society of clever people. This gave her a reputation for ability to which she was not entitled. The vanity which influences all mankind, even the best, influenced her.

* * * * * * *

CÆTERA DESUNT.

# MEMOIR OF EARL SPENCER.

## CHAPTER I.

### LORD SPENCER'S ANCESTRY.

LITTLE need be added to what Lord Spencer has said of his grandfather (the first Earl) in the foregoing Fragment. If that nobleman has been made the subject of rather indiscriminate eulogy, in the elegant epitaph prompted by the attachment of his son-in-law, the fifth Duke of Devonshire, it is only due to him to observe, that this is confirmed, as above stated, in many material points by the testimony of a much higher authority—the celebrated Sir William Jones.* Many generous actions are related of him; and he had at least the merit of being free from the intemperate habits which degraded his father, and too many of the English aristocracy, during the middle of the last century. He was averse to exertion, perhaps from temperament; and though somewhat reserved in manner, was true and warm in his friendships, almost to a fault; for I suspect it to be owing to this cause, rather than

John, first Earl Spencer.

* "Life of Sir William Jones;" see also "Baker's History of Northamptonshire."

to any decided views in politics—which his grandson justly doubts his having entertained—that he squandered such enormous sums in elections. The excitement also arising out of these contests, which none but those who have experienced it can appreciate, must have strongly operated on one by whom gambling was unhappily regarded almost as a necessity.* His connections in politics were creditable, for he owed his peerage to the recommendation of Mr. Pitt (the first Lord Chatham); and the only office he ever held was forced upon him by the Marquis of Rockingham, to whom he was deeply attached and adhered closely, during the protracted exclusion of their party from power. He did not long survive that nobleman, having died in October, 1783, at the early age of forty-nine.

Marries Miss Poyntz.

Horace Walpole sneers at Lord Spencer "for having married the daughter of a nobleman's tutor;" as if an alliance with the family of Mr. Poyntz,† who solely by his own merit had risen to be Minister Plenipotentiary in Sweden, one of the Commissioners at the Congress of Soissons, and a member of the Privy Council, could be regarded as any degradation.‡ If not nobly born, Lady Spencer, however,

* Althorp, in his time, became almost a gambling-house. The Christmas party used to sit up at high play, till what were called the little hours, two or three o'clock in the morning.—AUTHOR.

† Mr. Poyntz was highly esteemed in his day as a diplomatist. He belonged to a respectable family, which after having flourished for some centuries in Gloucestershire, had latterly settled in Berkshire. He happened in early life, shortly after he left college, to travel with the Duke of Devonshire, and hence the attack of Horace Walpole. He was afterwards governor of Prince William.—AUTHOR.

‡ Mr. Spencer married Miss Poyntz on the 27th Dec., 1755. The

as I am assured by one of her descendants, who has a vivid recollection of her, "was eminently high-bred in air and manner: a winning sweetness, with great dignity and benevolence of expression, giving her a peculiar charm." This was in her decline: in youth she had been the delight of society by her innocent and graceful sprightliness, and that desire to please, which seldom fails when as in her case it has its origin in a pure heart, and a well-regulated mind. She married early; and the attachment of her husband, who was reputed the richest commoner of his day, placed every indulgence at her disposal. The jewels with which he presented her on their

Character of Lady Spencer.

marriage was strictly private, and an amusing account is given of it in a letter written at the time, which I shall transcribe, with some slight omissions: "They had been for some time attached to each other; and on the day that Mr. Spencer came of age, he told Mr. Poyntz, who happened to be on a visit to Althorp, that he was determined to make Miss Poyntz his wife, as soon as he was master of himself; so he entreated they might be married the next day. His request was granted; and it was managed that, although fifty persons were in the house, none of them knew anything about the matter, except Lord and Lady Cowper, Mrs. Poyntz, and her eldest son; and it was not declared till the Saturday after. On the 27th December, after tea, the parties necessary for the wedding stole by degrees from the company, into Lady Cowper's dressing-room, where the ceremony was performed; and they returned different ways to the company again, and joined dancing with them. After supper, everybody retired as usual to their different apartments. Miss Poyntz and her sister lay, from their first going to Althorp, in the best apartments, and Miss Louisa resigned her place on this occasion."

"They have been most graciously received at court, and by my Lord Granville, who declares himself Mr. Spencer's rival, so at present there is as much happiness in that family as a mortal heart can contain. All enquired after you, and will take it very ill if you do not come in person to wish them joy. The town had married Miss Poyntz to Lord Fordwick, who, unluckily for a lover, is gone to school this very day." (MS. letter from Miss Granville, afterwards Mrs. Delany, to her sister, Ann, begun 14th and ended 17th January, 1756.)—AUTHOR.

marriage, were of a splendour that excited the admiration, perhaps the envy, of her female friends, one of whom, in a letter written at the time, describes them with an amusing particularity, and then adds, "all these things I have just seen at Mrs. Spencer's; who looked at them with the utmost unconcern, not as insensible to their merit, as fine of their kind and pretty things, but as the least part of her happiness. A begging letter delivered to her at the same time, which brought tears into her eyes, made her appear with more lustre than all her diamonds."* Prosperity, indeed, never seemed a trial to her. She had no pride, no feelings of exclusiveness, none of the slavish subservience to etiquette, which then characterised the female aristocracy; and yet her acquaintance was courted by the most fastidious of the class

* Another extract from the same letter may be inserted, giving an account of the bride's toilet, which might be mistaken for an extract from "Sir Charles Grandison":—"She was married in a white and silver, trimmed. I cannot remember the rest, only a pink satin with embroidered facings and robings in silver, done by Mr. Glegg. Her first suit she went to court in, was white and silver, as fine as brocade and silver could make it; the second, blue and silver; the third, pink, white, and gold colour, 6*l.* a-yard; the fourth, plain pink-colour satin. Her diamonds worth 12,000*l.*: her earrings, three drops, all diamonds, no paltry scrolls of silver: her necklace, most perfect brilliants, the middle stone worth 1000*l.*, set at the edge with small brilliants. Her cap, all brilliants, made in the fashion of a small butterfly skeleton, has a very good effect, with a pompion; and behind, where you may suppose the bottom of the caul, a knot of diamonds, with two little puffs of diamonds where the lappets are fastened; and two shaking sprigs of brilliants for her hair, six roses, all brilliants, for stags, set in the form of a star; and a seal of a Mercury, cut in very fine turquoise stone, set as a standing for a spaniel dog, the body of a pearl of the size of the Duchess of Portland's dolphin, the head and neck made out with gold finely wrought, two little brilliants for its eyes, and a brilliant collar; it cost seventy guineas."—AUTHOR.

to which she had been elevated. Lord March (afterwards Duke of Queensberry), a cynical courtier and an acute observer of life, writing to George Selwyn from Althorp, in 1767, says, "I wish you were here . . . . . The more I see of the mistress of the house, the more I admire her; and our landlord improves very much upon acquaintance. They are really the happiest people, I think, I ever saw in the marriage system. *Enfin, c'est le meilleur ménage possible.* I wish every hour of the day that you was with us; they would like you, and I am sure you would like them."* Her grandson is probably correct in his estimate of her abilities; there is no doubt that they could bear no comparison with his mother's. Her published letters are not remarkable for originality of thought, or power of observation; their merit lies in their good sense, ease, and simplicity, as well as in the amiable spirit which is said to have pervaded all she said and did.

These were the characteristics of her conversation. David Garrick has recorded with warm admiration the impression it made on him; and in her patronage of rising talent, in the choice of her friends, and in the education of her son, she unquestionably displayed no common sagacity and soundness of judgment.

In her old age, having lost her husband, and her beautiful and accomplished daughter, the Duchess of Devonshire, chastened, but not subdued, by sorrow, Lady Spencer withdrew from London, and passed the remaining years of her life entirely in the

* "George Selwyn and his contemporaries," v. ii. p. 213.

country. Her residence was in the immediate neighbourhood of the charitable establishment, founded at St. Alban's by her husband's ancestress, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough; the superintendence of which, and providing for the wants of its inmates, became her favourite employment; and her exertions for their temporal and spiritual benefit were unremitting. She was also one of the first in the higher classes to adopt Sunday-schools; and her name will be found among the bountiful supporters of many of the most useful plans originated in her day, for ameliorating the condition of the poor. She courted the society of all persons distinguished for their share in these benevolent undertakings. Mrs. Trimmer was her frequent guest, and became one of her most attached friends. Having retained her cheerfulness and sweetness of temper to the last, she expired, after a very short illness, on the 18th March, 1814, in her seventy-sixth year.*

Her death in 1814.

George John, second Earl Spencer.

George John, second Earl Spencer, K.G., had the good fortune to receive an education such as was bestowed on none of his contemporaries. His mother, when entrusting him to Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Jones, under whose care he passed five years, said, "Make him, if you can, like yourself." Nor was this a mere compliment; for Sir William Jones used to boast, that "with the fortune of a peasant, he had given himself the education of a prince." The method he so successfully followed in

Educated by Sir William Jones.

* An interesting account of Lady Spencer is given in the life of Mrs. Trimmer, pp. 130-134.—AUTHOR.

his own case, was that laid down by Milton* and Locke,† to which, with some modifications, he now adhered in the training of his pupil; and he performed a task, proverbially unattractive to men of genius, with a zeal and attention, scarcely, perhaps, paralleled but by Fénélon in earlier, and Arnold in later days. Although he could not remain with Lord Spencer beyond the early part of his education, for their relation only lasted from 1765 till 1770, when the latter was but twelve years old, he succeeded in forming his tastes, and giving a just direction to his pursuits, to an extent scarcely credible to those who did not witness the pains he bestowed on the accomplishment of his object. Sir Robert Adair, who was of the same age as Lord Spencer, and resided for more than a year in the same house with him and Sir William Jones, assured me, that he seemed to put the whole strength of his mind into the discharge of his duty, and that some of his maxims, which he then inculcated on his pupil, had often recurred to Sir Robert's memory in later days as not less original than instructive, and had indeed been of essential service to himself. Fortunately for Lord Spencer, Sir William Jones continued his constant correspondent and counsellor until he went out to India. The beautiful expression of the younger Pliny, in describing the tutor he was recommending to a friend, is strictly applicable to this great and good man:—"Nihil ex hoc viro

* Letter to Mr. Hartlib.
† Treatise on Education.

filius tuus audiet nisi profuturum, nihil discet quod nescisse rectius fuerit."*

It would have been strange if such advantages of education had failed to ensure their possessor, especially in his high station, some degree of eminence; and to these Lord Spencer certainly owed much of the success of his after life; since, although gifted with a clear and good understanding, highly susceptible of cultivation, he could not lay claim to brilliant abilities. He was neither an early, nor an eager candidate for political distinction. When a very young man, he had indeed attended some of the meetings for Parliamentary Reform; and finding (to use his own words) "among the advocates of that measure, men whose purpose overleaped their professions,"† he withdrew altogether from what he considered such dangerous society; and without absolutely abandoning the Whigs, he gave them, during some years, no support beyond his occasional attendance and silent votes in the House of Lords, where the party presented a feeble and ineffectual opposition to the measures of Mr. Pitt. As soon as the excesses of the French Revolution brought the antagonistic principles of political warfare into action even in England, Lord Spencer was one of the first of the great Whigs to pass over into the Tory camp. He indicated his intentions in a speech on the Alien Bill, in December, 1792, when, in supporting that measure, he entreated his friends not to impute his

Joins the Tory party

* Lib. iii. Ep. 3.

† "Parl. History," v. xxxi., p. 1286.

secession to a dereliction of principle, or to a diminution of the respect he entertained for their virtues or abilities, but to a sense of public duty.* At the opening of next Session, in speaking on the Address, he gave an almost unqualified adherence to the Ministry, accompanied however by a warm eulogium on Mr. Fox, whose probity and accomplishments he could justly appreciate, whilst he disapproved of his course in politics; and, from that time, his connexion with the Whigs entirely ceased, till 1806, when he joined Lord Grenville's administration. A few months after making this speech he was appointed Lord Privy Seal, and in December, First Lord of the Admiralty, a great promotion for an untried politician; and he owed it, no doubt, to the timely reinforcement, which his powerful connexions brought to Mr. Pitt's assistance at a period of extreme difficulty: still it seems that the public had already formed so high an estimate of his capacity, that his accession was generally considered to give strength to the Government; nor were the public in this instance mistaken, as his naval administration proved the only brilliant part of Mr. Pitt's war. He displayed throughout, an uncommon capacity for business, and a highly intelligent and comprehensive mind. The simple and unpretending manner in which he performed his duties furnished invidious critics with pretexts for disparaging his abilities, and treating them as unequal to high office. Lord Shelburne, especially, once hearing him warmly com-

Becomes Lord Privy Seal.—Afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty.

Success of his naval administration.

* "Parl. History," v. xxx., p. 160.

mended, observed, in his cynical way, "Yes, yes, he is, I believe, an excellent chairman of Quarter Sessions." In one quality, of great value to all statesmen, and especially to the chiefs of a naval department, he outshone most of his contemporaries, —Mr. Pitt not excepted—a keen and correct discernment of character: he could read men, and measure their abilities for the public service, with an almost unerring precision; and his judgment was never warped by considerations of party, or personal friendship. The contrast presented by his appointments to those of the Horse Guards, is sufficient to account, in no small degree, for the inferiority of the army to the navy at this period. The persons, indeed, to whom Lord Spencer gave his confidence, were all of distinguished merit. From his secretary, Mr. Marsden, the accomplished historian of Sumatra, up to the Admirals of the Fleet, they served him and their country admirably.

It was not alone, however, in the selection of such men as Howe, Nelson, Hood, Duncan, St. Vincent, and Collingwood for naval commands—resulting in the battles of St. Vincent, Camperdown, the Nile, and other great naval operations—and in the assistance which, as appears from their private and public letters, they received on all occasions from his advice and unflinching support, but in suppressing the great naval mutinies on our coasts, that Lord Spencer shone as a statesman. It is only necessary to refer to the Parliamentary debates to see how general, and how deep, was the consternation that then prevailed.

Lord Spencer's firmness and judgment never deserted him for a moment. Aided by Lord Howe, and Lord St. Vincent, and other eminent admirals, whose services he always gratefully acknowledged, he visited the fleet, examined himself the complaints of the seamen, and by a happy union of firmness and moderation restored loyalty to the service. This loyalty, however, would probably have been short-lived, but for the reforms he quickly introduced into the discipline of the navy, providing for the comforts of the men, and subjecting the authority of the officers over them to proper control; a measure which, by improving the condition of the sailor, raised the character of the service: scenes, such as had been described too faithfully by Smollett, could henceforth no longer occur on board a British ship of war. The establishment of this enlightened system, far in advance of the age, and a signal triumph over the prejudices of the profession, if he had done nothing else, would have given Lord Spencer an honourable place in our naval history; and it is due to his memory to add, that it has served as the basis on which the present administrative code has been framed by his various successors at the Admiralty.

Lord Spencer did not aspire to any independent influence in the Cabinet, being content to follow the lead of Mr. Pitt, for whom he contracted a warm admiration, and in after days would often dwell on the various traits he had witnessed, not only of his great abilities, but of his marvellous self-possession

and intrepidity: one characteristic anecdote, of his waking Mr. Pitt from sleep to receive some alarming intelligence, and Mr. Pitt, after discussing it with his usual sagacity, at once falling asleep again, is given correctly in Lord Holland's Memoirs, to whom he had no doubt related it. The generous spirit with which Mr. Pitt defended him in the House of Commons, at a most trying moment, against the eloquent denunciations of Sheridan, and the whole array of the Opposition, he never forgot. In return, he was always at his post to raise his voice in the House of Lords, in vindication of the course pursued by Mr. Pitt. Judging from the reports of his speeches in the Parliamentary debates, his strength seems to have lain most in reply, when he met the arguments of his adversaries with firmness and resolution, and sometimes with more than common dialectic skill. Sir Robert Inglis, who had often heard him, told me that he was always clear, sensible, and intelligent, qualities that with his extent of general information, his high personal character, and a style and manner admirably suited to his audience, must have made his speeches useful; but I doubt his having ever possessed the flow of words or force of expression, much less the imagination or impetuosity of feeling, that rivet the attention of popular assemblies.

Resigns on the Catholic question.

Having resigned with Mr. Pitt on the Catholic question Lord Spencer never held office afterwards, except as Secretary to the Home Department, during the brief administration of his friend and

Secretary the ne Dement.

former colleague, Lord Grenville, in 1806. I think it no exaggerated praise to claim for him the honour of being one of the few successful statesmen whose conduct in retirement fully maintained the dignity of his character. He was wholly exempt from the morbid feelings, which so often distort the judgment, and exasperate the passions, of disappointed politicians. Whatever might be his concern at the course which public affairs had taken, no one ever ventured to charge him with sacrificing the interests of the country to those of his party. At the same time he did not shrink from what he conceived to be his duty, as he showed by his attacks on the Addington Ministry, whose inadequacy to the fearful exigencies of the time he often most emphatically proclaimed in the House of Lords, with a warmth in which he was hardly surpassed even by Mr. Windham in the House of Commons; and I must add, more disinterestedly, as, unlike that statesman, he never was haunted by any visions of office. The healthy tone of his mind was strikingly manifested in his pursuits. Happily for him, he combined with studious habits a great love of the country and all out-of-door employments; and this was not confined to field-sports. Without presuming to emulate the example of Lord Townshend, to whose exclusion from office the county of Norfolk mainly owes its present improved system of husbandry, Lord Spencer entered heartily into the movement made at the beginning of the century, for the more scientific treatment of agriculture. The owners of Holkham and Woburn were amongst

Pursuits in his retirement.

his most intimate friends; and the example of the farm at Althorp (no insignificant item in his expenditure), where many experiments were made and new methods adopted, was not without good effect in Northamptonshire. He by no means neglected the management of his extensive estates in Northamptonshire, Norfolk, Middlesex, and Surrey, the rental of which at one time reached nearly 60,000*l.* a year.* "The wants and wishes of his tenantry always received his patient and indulgent consideration," as was appropriately expressed in their Address to him at Althorp in 1816, upon the occasion of their presenting him with a magnificent vase, in acknowledgment of his unvarying liberality and kindness. The delight and pride he took in his country seat, feelings seemingly peculiar to English statesmen as distinguished from foreign ones, and certainly creditable to the national character, entitle him to be named amongst those who successfully cultivated the more elegant branches of rural economy. Sir Robert Walpole created Houghton, and the woods of his planting are still its principal ornament, as the contemplation of them formed almost the only solace of his political disappointments. Lord Grenville, in our times, converted a barren heath into the most picturesque arboretum in Europe, and nearly forgot the pressure of age and infirmity in this delightful

* It must not be supposed, that Lord Spencer had a net income to this amount. His estates were, unfortunately for him, heavily charged, as is the case with so many of the possessions of our aristocracy.—AUTHOR.

occupation.* In the preceding century, another too well-known statesman, Lord Sunderland, was praised by Evelyn for his Plantations at Althorp;† but the grounds and gardens, and some of the finest features of the park, were planned by his descendant, Lord Spencer. He also made large additions to the mansion in 1790, under the superintendence of the late Mr. Holland, the architect. In the spacious suite of rooms he placed that splendid collection of books, which alone sufficed to give him a reputation throughout Europe. It was estimated to contain forty or fifty thousand volumes, amongst which were the choicest treasures of Bibliography. He was deeply versed in the science; and his cultivation of it, having been followed by the Duke of Marlborough and other noblemen, brought the taste into fashion. Some of these votaries attended more to the outside of

* Lord Grenville's letter to Mr. Repton, on Landscape Gardening, gives a beautiful picture of the moral effects of the art.—AUTHOR.

† "I went to see my Lord Sunderland's seat at Althorp, four miles from the ragged town of Northampton (since burned and well rebuilt). 'Tis placed in a pretty open bottome, very finely watred and flanqued with stately woods and groves in a parke, with a canall, but the water is not running, which is a defect. The house, a kind of modern building, of freestone, within most nobly furnished. The appartments very commodious, a gallerie, and noble hall, but the kitchen being in the body of the house, and chapell too small, were defects. There is an old yet honorable gatehouse standing awry and out-housing mean, but designed to be taken away. It was moated round after the old manner, but is now dry and turfed with a beautifull carpet. Above all are admirable and magnificent the severall ample gardens furnished with the choicest fruite and exquisitely kept. Greate plenty of oranges and other curiosities." "Evelyn's Memoirs and Correspondence," v. ii. p. 409.—EDITOR.

books, as in the Shippe of Fooles,* the book-fool says—

> " Styth am I besy bokes assemblinge
> For to have plenty it is a plesaunt thynge
> In my concete, and have them aye in hande,
> But what they mene, do I not understonde."

Mr. Canning used to say he once found that great bibliographer, Mr. Dent, with a book before him turned upside down. It was far otherwise with Lord Spencer. Although he would, no doubt, sometimes "exhaust a morning over his early editions of Cicero," as it is recorded in Mr. Gibbon's correspondence he did, in the company, and much to the satisfaction, of the historian,† he was a great reader; and the exquisite relish he had contracted for his favourite authors stood even the test of official excitement and disquietude. On one occasion, when First Lord of the Admiralty, a long continuation of hard work and anxiety had driven him to call in Dr. Baillie, who prescribed a day's cessation from business, and a play of Euripides, which treatment was entirely successful.‡ Not only was he a good scholar, but I am informed by Lord Brougham, that he had a taste for science, and upon the death of Sir Joseph Banks would

* "Shippe of Fooles"—Barclay's metrical translation, A.D. 1507, stanza 2.

† Letter from "Althorp Library." Gibbon's Miscellaneous Works, v. i. p. 289.

‡ I remember his saying that while at the Admiralty he had read many of the classics, including much of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.—Lord Lyttelton.

have been proposed as President of the Royal Society, had he not absolutely refused his consent. His conversation, I can state on the same high authority, to have been most interesting and instructive. "He had lived," says Lord Brougham, "with the very best society all his life, foreign as well as English. He was full of anecdote accordingly, and his mode of relating was excellent, being both succinct and accurate, and so were all his political recollections, of which he had the richest store of almost any man I have known."

Lord Spencer had been very good-looking in his youth: * indeed, Miss Burney in her Diary describes him as very handsome; and "his fine blue eyes" seemed to have made an impression on her, which might be traced in the somewhat minute portraits that crowd the pages of her earlier novels. There was a refinement, both in his mind and manners, not unworthy of the most polished courtiers of the days of Louis the XIVth, and yet quite untainted by affectation. A degree of constitutional reserve, which he inherited from his father, and transmitted to his son, was often mistaken for pride by mere acquaintances; but it soon wore off in the society of those who knew and loved him. He was seen to great advantage with literary men, among whom he had many friends: Peter Elmsley, the learned editor of Sophocles, Major Rennell, the geographer, and Dr. Wollaston, the philosopher, were his constant guests. These gentlemen were in affluent circumstances; but

* See his portrait by Reynolds, at Althorp.—Lord Lyttelton.

some of the accomplished scholars who frequented Spencer House had often to struggle with pecuniary difficulties, and to them his purse was always open; while they likewise benefited largely by his interest in the Church, and other professions. Thus he was the earliest patron of Bishop Blomfield, who owed to him his first preferment, the living of Chesterford; without which it is not improbable that this able prelate would have long languished in obscurity, gaining a poor livelihood from the charge of private pupils.* It was remarked that Lord Spencer's reserve immediately vanished when he had an opportunity of doing an act of kindness.

Marriage with Miss Bingham.

Lord Spencer, soon after he came of age, married Miss Lavinia Bingham, eldest daughter of Lord Lucan, an Irish Peer, whose intimacy with Johnson, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Reynolds, and Burke has secured him frequent and honourable notice by Boswell. It was a marriage of inclination, and a very happy one.

Her character.

Lady Spencer was in the bloom of youth, and not

* This statement is not quite accurate. The living which Lord Spencer gave to the Bishop was Dunton (in Bucks)—the first at which the Bishop *resided*. He had previously been curate of Chesterford, which was in the gift of the Earl of Bristol, who afterwards presented him to the living, (in 1817) on which he resigned Dunton. His *first* preferment was Quarrington (in Lincolnshire), also in the gift of the Earl of Bristol.—REV. A. BLOMFIELD.

I have heard that the Earl of Bristol was on intimate terms with the Bishop's father (who resided at Bury St. Edmunds), and became godfather to his son, promising to do what he could to provide for him; in fulfilment of this promise he afterwards gave him the living of Chesterford. The Bishop would probably have risen to eminence in any event, as he was a most distinguished classical scholar, and if he had remained in the university would no doubt have attained a high place there.—EDITOR.

less admired for her beauty, than for the bright intellectual look, and graceful smile, so conspicuous in her portraits by Reynolds. Gibbon, whom she visited, with Lord Spencer, at Lausanne, in 1795, says of her and her husband, in a letter to Lord Sheffield :*—"He is a valuable man, and when he is familiar, a pleasant companion. She is a charming woman, who, with sense and spirit, has the playfulness and simplicity of a child. You are not ignorant of her talents, of which she has left me an agreeable specimen—a drawing of the Historic Muse, sitting in a thoughtful posture to compose."

The opinion thus given of Lady Spencer was fully confirmed by the high position she long filled in London society. In force of character, and brilliancy of conversation, she was surpassed by few women of her time. If she appeared to aim at a somewhat exclusive sway in politics and fashion, it was from no love of power or display. She cared for neither, except as they entered into her view of the duties of her station ; since it was chiefly in her zeal for what she thought right, that her naturally fervid spirit betrayed itself. "Ipsa Agrippina paulo commotior, nisi quod castitate et mariti amore quamvis indomitum animum in bonum vertebat."†

Her contemporaries.

With men out of the common stamp, she was generally a favourite. They admired her sagacity, frankness, and pungency of expression. The great Naval Commanders who frequented the Admiralty

* Miscell. Works; ed. 1814, v. ii. p. 384.
† Taciti Annal. lib. i. 33.

during Lord Spencer's Administration felt the influence of her superior mind; Nelson and Collingwood particularly. She is often touchingly mentioned in their letters, as one who was sure to sympathise with them in their difficulties. She had the penetration to see and appreciate the genius of Nelson, through the cloud of personal vanity and silly conceit, which caused him to be so lightly estimated in London society. She used playfully to call him her bull-dog. A certain amount of haughtiness prevented her being generally popular, but this was based on a strict, perhaps a stern sense of propriety; and although not without great failings of temper, she had a true and warm heart. "Never," Lord Brougham told me, "was there a more zealous and steady friend. I should not have advised any one to whisper a word against a person she was attached to. In return, the friendships she inspired were deep and lasting." When Lord Spencer retired from politics, she gradually contracted her circle of acquaintances. Spencer House then became the resort of a few distinguished men, some eminent in science and letters, and others as statesmen and courtiers; amongst the latter, none were more constantly seen there, than two persons of very different characters, but equally marked by their friendship for Lord and Lady Spencer: Mr. Thomas Grenville,* the attached and inseparable companion of Lord Spencer both in public life and in retirement, whose rare accomplishments as a scholar and a gentleman overshadowed

* See note (*a*), p. 21.

even his merits as a politician; and George, Earl of Essex,* who with much of the gay pleasant humour of his grandfather, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, had none of his malignity, and was perhaps without a rival in his intimate knowledge of French and English society, in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The illustrious chiefs of the Whig party, Earl Grey and Lord Grenville, were occasional visitors; the latter being drawn with difficulty from his favourite retreat at Dropmore; whilst several of their younger followers, then rising into distinction, such as Mr. Horner, Mr. Brougham, and Lord John Russell, assiduously cultivated Lady Spencer's friendship, attached by her talents, as well as justly esteeming it a privilege to be on terms of familiar intercourse with the contemporaries and friends of Burke, Fox, and Pitt,—men who had been eye and ear witnesses of the great Parliamentary contests of the last century. Even to Mr. Horner with his abstract turn of mind this was no light advantage. It certainly has proved a frequent source of inspiration, both to Lord Brougham and Lord John Russell, whose finest speeches are enriched by traits in that period of our history not to be found in books, and having all the freshness and distinctness to be derived only from contemporary information.

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(*a*) Lord and Lady Spencer had no older or dearer friend than Mr. Thomas Grenville. Much of his time, when out of London, was passed at Althorp, which, next to Drop- Mr. Thomas Grenville.

* See note (*b*), p. 25.

more, was his favourite country house. Being a bachelor, he contented himself with a single establishment, his mansion (at that time in Brook Street*), which with its splendid library had, for its size, nothing equal to it in London. He regarded himself as one of the Spencer family; and, indeed, both the parents and the children, when they wanted counsel on occasions of difficulty, always resorted to him. His memory is deservedly venerated by their descendants.

Mr. Grenville was some years older than Lord Spencer, but in character far more enterprising and ambitious. On leaving Oxford he entered the Foot Guards, with the view of following the army as a profession. But early abandoning the Tory creed of his family, he suffered the penalty, usual at that day, of such an indiscretion, by finding his promotion stopped, which made him quit the service in disgust. Not that he had any just ground of complaint, if (as the late Lady Holland and Lord Macaulay† used to relate) he had, with other young men of rank, been in the mob which broke down the Admiralty gates, on Lord Keppel's acquittal, in 1779. He revenged himself on Lord North, in a maiden speech of great promise. The Ministry, already feeble and unpopular, lasted just long enough for him to signalise himself among its opponents; and so rapidly and effectually did he rise in favour with the chiefs of his party, especially Mr. Fox, that on the change of government two years after, he was despatched, at the age of twenty-seven, to Paris, to negotiate the Treaty of American Independence. Although soon recalled, when the intrigues of Lord Shelburne broke up the Government, it was only to receive a still higher distinction from the Coalition Ministry, in his nomination as Governor-General of India—the actual appointment being delayed until the India Bill had passed.

The India Bill, however, did not pass: and, as an additional mortification to Mr. Grenville, its defeat was accomplished mainly through his elder brother, the Mar-

* When I knew him it was in Cleveland Row.—Lord Lyttelton.

† I heard him myself.—Lord Lyttelton.

quis of Buckingham, who, in the sequel, with his youngest brother, Mr. W. Grenville, became a leading member of the Government, formed by their kinsman, Mr. Pitt, on the ruin of the Coalition. To the credit of the brothers, their domestic harmony remained uninterrupted in all their political differences. Mr. Grenville cheerfully shared the proscription of the Whigs, which fell with peculiar severity upon him; for, besides his Indian appointment, he lost his seat for Bucks. Virtually, the decided complexion of his politics, or the friendship he had contracted with Mr. Fox, kept him out of the Cabinet for the next quarter of a century, as it was not till 1806 that he came into office, with Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville, as President of the Board of Control; and he was afterwards First Lord of the Admiralty. Alienated as he had been in the interval from Mr. Fox, on account of the French Revolution, and yielding so far to the necessities of the times as to give his support to Mr. Pitt, not even the example of his friends the Duke of Portland, Lord Spencer, and for a while Lord Fitzwilliam, could overcome his repugnance to identify himself thoroughly with a Tory Government. His acceptance of the Embassies to Vienna and Berlin—at critical periods of the war—were services rendered to the country, rather than to the Ministry; and the latter nearly cost him his life, for the Proserpine frigate, in which he sailed, was wrecked off Embden, when some of the crew perished; and his courage and foresight essentially contributed to the preservation of the survivors. Justice was done to the abilities and address he displayed in these embassies, fruitlessly as they were employed against the terror of the French arms; and he received the sinecure appointment of one of the Chief Justice-ships in Eyre after his return.

His nice sense of honour and duty, although it may for a time have clouded his prospects, had its reward in the esteem and confidence with which he was regarded by the whole Liberal party. No other man (as was generally believed) could have brought to a successful issue the negotiations for the reunion of the party in 1806; and he

might perhaps have succeeded Mr. Fox as Leader of the House of Commons, but for the natural unwillingness of the Whigs to give the Grenvillites so decided a preponderance in the Government.

Mr. Grenville was a graceful, sensible, and occasionally a powerful speaker in Parliament. His nicely poised periods, and neat, terse, sentences had many admirers; and few men knew better the right time to cut into a debate, and, by a few weighty remarks closely to the point, to give an argument the turn he wished. He had the stately manner of his grandfather, Sir William Wyndham (like whom he was eminently handsome), the same elegance of diction, and certainly far more extensive knowledge; but the marvellous natural gifts which, according to Pope, made Wyndham "master of our passions and his own,"* he had not equally inherited. He was too fond of refinements, and too fastidious in his tastes—even if he had had sufficient compass of thought and richness of imagination—to rise to the heights of eloquence. It was only now and then that he produced a fine speech. Lord Brougham told me, that he often provoked a smile by the stress he laid on his "the's" and "that's," so that Sheridan, when once discussing his claims to the Leadership, observed, that the party was not to be governed by particles. He rather maintained an honourable place by the side of the great Whig leaders, than achieved an independent reputation. He owed much of the consideration he enjoyed with his party, to qualities which are always more justly appreciated in a statesman out of office. His attainments were varied, and extensive. He had studied the Economists, when even Charles Fox only laughed at them, and was an early and zealous advocate of free trade. If he could not boast, like his brother Lord Grenville, of knowing the Iliad and Odyssey by heart, he was not less an admirer of their beauties, as he showed by

* "Or Wyndham just to freedom and the throne,
The master of our passions and his own."
Epilogue to Satires, Dial. ii. 89 (Pope).

his share in the edition of the Grenville Homer; and his critical knowledge of Plato would have done no discredit to a German professor. In extreme old age, he would read some of the Dialogues over and over again, with all the enthusiasm of a youthful student. Lucretius was his favourite author in Latin. His library, the noble bequest he made to the nation, had been collected by himself alone; and he was fond of saying, that when an ensign in the Guards, he had bid at a sale, against a whole bench of bishops, for a rare edition of the Bible. The charms of his conversation seemed equally to fascinate scholars and courtiers; and some of the leading beauties were believed not insensible to his merit. No man indeed of his day had more brilliant success in society; and if not one of the very ablest members of his party, he was certainly one of its chief ornaments. Singularly exempt from the infirmities of age, his form but slightly bent, and his mind losing little of its power, he bore the pressure of years with cheerfulness, and closed a prosperous and happy life with pious resignation on the 17th December, 1846, at the age of 91.—AUTHOR.

(*b*) The Earl of Essex, when very young, had lived at the Court of Louis XVI., on the same easy footing that the Count de Grammont had attained at that of Charles II.: and could he have found another Hamilton, might have left equally amusing memoirs; for he abounded in anecdotes, and related them very pleasantly. He was often included in the hunting-parties to Fontainebleau. The first time he went there (I have heard him say), his friend, the Grand Chamberlain, told him, under great excitement, as the guests were assembling for dinner, that the discovery had just been made of a fatal objection to his sitting at the royal table, as he held no office. He of course expressed his ready acquiescence in any other arrangement; but the King, overhearing the discussion, was less punctilious than his courtiers, and laughed heartily, saying that if there was no precedent he would make one. The

Earl of Essex.

Chamberlain, in conducting Lord Essex to his seat, observed, with much solemnity, "Ma foi, vous ferez une époque."

Such frivolities, with the vicious pursuits from which few households were exempt, engrossed, according to Lord Essex, the thoughts of the French noblesse. Whatever contradiction had been officially given to the statements in the Memoirs of the profligate Duc de Lauzun, I have heard him say, that he knew them to be, with few exceptions, substantially correct,—the Duc having been his intimate friend; and he was able, in like manner, to authenticate many revolting statements in other autobiographical memoirs of the same period. Some of these Memoirs are known to be apocryphal, such as those of Louis XVIII., but Talleyrand assured Lord Essex that they contained a great deal that was true, as he could testify. The Duke of Wellington read this book with interest, and asked Lord Essex whether the picture it gave of French society could be depended on. Being answered in the affirmative, the Duke shrewdly said, "then we need seek no further for the causes of the Revolution." The poor King was utterly misplaced in the midst of this brilliancy and licentiousness. According to Lord Essex, he had the most common appearance, and a heavy figure—was generally ill-dressed and very dirty—which, with his coarseness in eating, made the ceremony of his dining in public materially detract from his dignity. These defects, which clouded many excellent qualities of head and heart, enhanced the merit of the Queen, whose reputation Lord Essex always defended as warmly as he eulogised her grace and affability. He would not even allow that her conduct had laid her open to just suspicion, except perhaps in her friendship with Count Fersen, whom he described as one of the most accomplished and agreeable men of that day; an opinion in which the Duke of Dorset fully concurred.

Lord Essex returned from his travels with the reputation of great success in foreign society. George Selwyn

and Lord Carlisle admitted him into their set. He wrote some smart pieces in the "Foundling Hospital for Wit." With refined tastes, and some talent for conversation, gallant, good-natured, lively, and handsome—for although rather diminutive, he had a light, well-formed person, and a face of almost girlish beauty—he became a favourite of the women, "a chartered libertine;" he was benignantly received at Court, and soon selected for a high place in the household of the young Prince of Wales. He long enjoyed the Prince's confidence—a distinction which in after-life he dwelt on with small satisfaction. He described the Prince as false, heartless, and profligate. His own life had been too much given to pleasure, of which he had reaped the ordinary fruits in much domestic unhappiness; but a genuine respect for virtue, a kind disposition, and a deep interest in the arts, particularly painting and sculpture, of which he was an excellent judge and a generous patron, shed some brightness on his old age. It was then that I enjoyed his friendship; and at his hospitable table I have often met some of the most illustrious statesmen, writers, and artists of the day—Grey, Brougham, Denman, Melbourne, Holland, Lansdowne, Sydney Smith, Rogers, Tom Moore, Westmacott, Wilkie, Calcott, Leslie, Chantrey, &c.; and never did I see these eminent men, in their private hours, to greater advantage; for Lord Essex, without talking much himself, had great ingenuity in promoting conversation, and, whilst eminently well-bred, was never dull. His recollections—which he was chary of imparting, from his dread of a "twice-told tale,"—had great interest, and he carried them back to his great-aunt, the Duchess of Queensberry,* by whom he had been treated

* Horace Walpole, in a letter to Sir H. Mann, April 26, 1771, sings her praises in the following lines:—

"To many a Kitty Love his ear
Will for a day engage,
But Prior's Kitty, ever fair,
Obtained it for an age."—

with great kindness when a boy. Lord Essex died in 1839, at a very advanced age.—AUTHOR.

Horace Walpole alludes to that well-known ode "The Female Phäeton," written by Prior in praise of the Duchess of Queensberry, then Lady Catherine Hyde, daughter of the Earl of Clarendon; her sister, Lady Jane Hyde, had lately married the third Earl of Essex.

"Thus Kitty, beautiful and young,
And wild as colt untamed,
Bespoke the fair from whence she sprung
With little rage inflamed.

* * * *

Must Lady Jenny frisk about,
And visit with her cousins?
At balls must *she* make all the rout,
And bring home hearts by dozens?

* * * *

Dearest Mamma, for once let me
Unchained my fortune try;
I'll have an Earl as well as she,
Or know the reason why.

* * * *

Fondness prevailed, Mamma gave way,
Kitty, at heart's desire,
Obtained the chariot for a day,
And *set the world on fire*."—EDITOR.

## CHAPTER II.

### CHILDHOOD.

1782–98. Æt. 1–16.

Birth of John Charles, Viscount Althorp.

JOHN CHARLES, Viscount Althorp, afterwards Earl Spencer—the subject of this Memoir—the eldest child of Lord and Lady Spencer, was born at Spencer House, on the 30th May, 1782.

Early education.

It must have excited some surprise, that, with such parents, Lord Althorp should dwell, in his autobiographical sketch, on the "deficiencies of his education;" especially as it will be seen that he went through the usual course of study at a public school, and at the university, and even had the advantage (in his time an uncommon one) of a tour through France and Italy. Perhaps from constant observation of his father's superior attainments, he may have undervalued his own; and, like all men who have closely studied their own minds, he was oppressed by the reflection that, with earlier and improved instruction, some of his faculties would have reached a higher development. In reality, he was brought up like the majority of young noblemen,*

* Dean Swift's strictures on the education of the higher classes, at the beginning of the last century, are very remarkable, considering that this was the Augustan age of our literature. He says: "From

1782-98. Æt. 1-16. except that the engagements of Lord and Lady Spencer, at a period of unexampled political excitement, certainly withdrew their attention from their son, to a degree scarcely compatible with their known affection for him. Bishop Sherlock has justly remarked, that "when parents neglect the care of their children, they are left to pick up notions and opinions from others,—perhaps from the footman, who, oftentimes, is a constant companion to the heir of the family."* This was literally the case with Lord Althorp, whose first impressions of duty and knowledge were derived from a Swiss footman of Lady Spencer.

This person, though himself imperfectly acquainted with English, taught him to read, and was his sole instructor and most intimate associate until he went to school. Thus the incalculable benefits of sound early tuition, and the purifying influences of parental intercourse, were equally denied him. His portrait, indeed, was taken by Sir Joshua Reynolds; and the fine specimen of that great master in the gallery at Althorp, representing a bluff, robust boy, about five years old, with a fresh complexion and flaxen hair, was one of the very few privileges that rank and wealth obtained for him in childhood. As might be

frequently reflecting on the course and method of educating youths in this and a neighbouring kingdom, with the general success and consequence thereof, I am come to this determination, that education is always the worse in proportion to the wealth and grandeur of the parents." (Essay on Modern Education; Works, v. ix. p. 365.)—AUTHOR.

* Discourses, v. iii. p. 411.

expected, he grew up shy and awkward; and the want of refinement frequently noticed in him afterwards, so unlike the manners of either his father or mother, can only be explained by the fact, that his intercourse with domestics had been closer than is usually permitted to children, even of lower rank. This evil was aggravated by the early predilection he showed for field-sports,—which Lord Spencer, an eager sportsman himself, like most of the Northamptonshire aristocracy, warmly encouraged. The earliest of his compositions on record is a narrative of a successful day's sport, in which, though only seven years old, he had no doubt borne a conspicuous part. This was indorsed by Lord Spencer, and carefully kept among his papers; and, as the first of a series of letters from a future Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, it may still be read with interest.

1789. Æt. 7.

"Dear Papa,

"I went to Brington Hill this morning, and catched four rabbits, and there was a good many people; and I did not know who they were all.

"We threw off at ten o'clock. Tartar and Bowler, and Punch and Turpin, did very well; but Jenny's puppy did not do well, for she cried at the bushes. Fanny did very well, too. I rode upon Castlebar, and Ned Corns was behind; John Townshend and James walked by me, and I went a gallop, and had good sport. When you come back there is to be a race, in which you are to run, and so shall John Townshend, and Jack Corns, and Peter. I am to ride upon Ginger, and you shall ride upon Cowslip: I got these horses at the races at Northampton,

1789–98. Æt. 7–16. and yours is a very good one. You have been a long time away. So no more.

"JACK SPENCER, Viscount Althorp."

Received October 28th, 1789.

It was the practice in the last century to send boys much younger to public schools than at present, and accordingly Lord Althorp was placed at Harrow when scarcely eight years old; his father had also gone there at the same age, but accompanied by Mr. Jones as his private tutor. Lord Althorp had no private tutor; and although the head master, Dr. Drury, a well-known and accomplished scholar, received boys into his house as pupils and boarders, Lord and Lady Spencer were contented to consign their son to the care of Dr. Bromley, one of the assistant masters, who also kept a boarding-house; a gentleman having very moderate pretensions to scholarship or talent, and with no recommendations beyond good nature, personal worth, and a long residence as tutor in the family of the Earl of Pembroke.

Lord Althorp's youth necessarily caused him to be placed very low in the school; but he had the good fortune to find an indulgent master in a boy named Hodges, since well known in the House of Commons as member for Kent, and one of the best specimens of the old English country gentleman. Even after the lapse of so many years, Mr. Hodges could not speak of him to me without emotion. He described him as a quiet, bashful boy, with great

sweetness of temper, and eminently truthful. As to scholarship, he said he had evidently been ill-grounded, and seemed, at first, hard pressed to maintain his place in his class. This difficulty he probably soon overcame, as he used in his leisure hours to read books not forming part of his lessons; and thus he went through Virgil's Georgics with his friend and class fellow, Henry Pepys, since Bishop of Worcester. In time, his exercises, by dint of industry, became sufficiently correct, but they evinced no powers of composition. His schoolfellow, Lord de Mauley, indeed, writes to me, "He had good abilities. It was a great catch to get hold of a copy of his exercises, when the occasion presented itself;" but it must be remembered that clever exercises are seldom borrowed for this purpose, as they would betray the deception: exercises free from faults are the great desiderata with idle copyists. The inquiries of Mr. Oxenham, formerly one of the assistant masters, have confirmed this impression. He informed me, that "Lord Althorp was in no way distinguished at school." In short, he passed through Harrow without giving any indication of superior capacity, or gaining any distinctions, beyond those awarded to industry and good conduct. Still he was no common boy. Independently of an excellent temper, he had a mingled nobleness and gentleness of heart that kept him out of schoolboy vices, added to a genuineness of character almost amounting to originality. He was just the boy whom Dr. Arnold would have loved,

1789-98. Æt. 7-16.

1789-98. Æt. 7-16.

and encouraged to expect God's blessing in after life. If not endowed with great abilities, he was thoughtful, manly, and industrious. He had high principles, with a sturdiness of purpose that could hardly have been expected in one so modest and retiring; indeed, a cool, fearless resolution already formed a prominent feature in his character. This appeared on several occasions: once, in particular, when he was returning from London under the charge of his tutor's wife, their chaise was abruptly stopped near Pinner by a highwayman, who presenting his pistol, demanded their money and watches. Far from being alarmed, or even disconcerted, Lord Althorp, to the horror of his companion, burst into a violent fit of laughter. Fortunately, this had no consequences beyond, perhaps, hastening the perpetration of the robbery. When questioned as to the motive of such unseasonable merriment, he replied, that he was exceedingly sorry, but the fellow's voice and manner were so ludicrous, that not to laugh was impossible.

Many of Lord Althorp's letters from Harrow have been preserved among the Spencer papers. I have transcribed a few of them, as evidences of what he was in childhood, and certainly not as showing talent beyond his age. They also indicate his tastes and pursuits; which, I am told, already foreshadowed those of the man. The interest commonly taken by boys in animals and birds, was in him almost a passion, and he watched their habits with an attention, of which the results may be seen in

the Dialogues on Instinct.* The Bishop of Worcester told me that he seemed born for a country life; and it was his wish to know what this had been in the time of the Romans, that led him to study Virgil's Georgics. All athletic exercises had charms for him; especially football and rackets, and this feeling may afterwards have led him to adopt Mr. Windham's theory, of the national importance of encouraging all manly sports among the lower classes; and although I trust that he did not, like that statesman, patronise bull-baiting, he must stand convicted as a lover of the Ring. He not only often attended the pugilistic displays of Jackson and Cribb, but himself handled the gloves with more than ordinary skill. We may smile at the pleasure he took in sailing his little boats in the muddy waters of Duck-Puddle, but it ripened into an earnest desire to enter the Navy, of which he naturally saw the most favourable specimens in the distinguished officers who frequented the Admiralty. Great as was Lord Spencer's attachment to the profession, which he afterwards proved by placing two of his younger sons in it,† he had other views for his eldest son; and, notwithstanding Lord Althorp's rather pressing representations, would not listen to the proposal.

1790. Æt. 8.

* See Lord Brougham's Works, v. iii. p. 1 (1833).—AUTHOR.

† The late Captain the Hon. Sir Robert Spencer, K.C.H., and Admiral Frederick Earl Spencer, K.G., C.B.

1790.
Æt. 8.

Letters from Harrow to his father.

"HARROW, *September 25th*, 1790.

"DEAR PAPA,

"You cannot think how many eggs my two grubs have laid, and I am very glad I did not bring the rest, as I should not have known what to do with them. There are four boys now below me, and one is having a struggle with me, for he is to be flogged if he does not keep up with me, and I shall not get my lessons ill to save him. How many brace of partridges did you kill, when you was out a shooting?

"I am, dear Papa, your dutiful son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *October 31st*, 1790.

"DEAR PAPA,

"How do you like the pictures I sent you? Could you see any likeness to Wimbledon? I send you now a picture of the first fable of Phædrus, which we construed last week: I hope to send you a better one by-and-by: you must tell Mama what it is that Lupus and Agnus say. Pray give my duty to her and to Nan, and love to Sall* and Dick.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *November 14th*, 1790.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I am very much obliged to you for the letter, and I shall be very glad to have the fox's brush. Who came in at the death? and how long did the chace last? I am in the 'Selectæ,' and the books that I read are 'Selectæ e veteri,' and 'Phædrus;' sometimes I read ancient history, and sometimes I do geography and 'Exempla.'

"Mr. Mark Drury has put me back in 'Exempla' to go

* Lady Sarah Spencer—afterwards Lady Lyttelton.

on with the class, and Mr. Bromley makes me go on where I was before, as often as he can. I made some cork boats yesterday. I beg my duty to Mama, 1791. Æt. 9.

"and am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *November 30th*, 1790.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I have got another prize sixpence: this is a George the Second. But I think the grandson looks as old as the grandfather. We had speeches yesterday, and the subject was Sylla, and there were ten that spoke. It's very cold. There was ice yesterday, but no sliding yet. I shall see you now in little more than a week, as the school breaks up the 11th of December. Does John Pon.* go home the same day that I do? I hope Mama and Nan are well. I beg my duty to them, and love to Brother and Sister,

"and am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *January 23rd*, 1791.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I shall be very glad to come home at Easter, and see my garden, and my boat, and everybody, and everything at Althorp. I have said my task pretty well, and Mr. Drury said my writing task was very well done. All the selectæ† are not quite come yet, but we have got into regular business. When I came to Harrow, the wind had broke my window, and wetted the paper. Have many trees fallen down in the park at Althorp, or have any of the slates been blown off the house? Will you take care of these two little pictures for me till I come back? I hope you and Mama are quite well; tell her, I suppose her

* John Ponsonby, afterwards Earl of Bessborough.

† *Sic* in orig.; probably "Shell."—EDITOR.

1791. Æt. 9. dairy has been blown down, and that some of the chickens have broke their legs; but, if they have, she shall have some of mine.

"I am, dear Papa, your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP.

"P.S. I hope you will write to me soon, and tell me how everything does at Althorp."

"HARROW, *January* 23*rd*, 1791. Saturday night.

"MY LORD,

"I beg leave to write your Lordship a line, just to say that the letter Lord Althorp has written is, as he calls it, 'the sort of letter, I think I ought to write, because, if I write in a pleasant way, it will keep Dick from their thoughts, and on that account I should like to write as long a letter as possible.' I could not help giving you this trait of him, which must endear him to every one that hears it, though the mentioning of it has obliged me to do the very thing he wished to avoid. He is, in general, pretty cheerful, and we take care to keep him so; but his own sensibility, and his consideration what yours and his Mama's must be on the present occasion, I could not conceal from you.

"I am, my Lord,

"your obliged

"and faithful humble servant,

"THOS. BROMLEY.

"Mrs. Bromley presents her respectful compliments to Lord Spencer, and if his Lordship thinks it will be any satisfaction to Lady Spencer to hear more frequently of Lord Althorp's welfare during the present distrest state of her Ladyship's mind, Mrs. B. will be happy to write as often as her Ladyship wishes." *

* This letter, and the preceding one from Lord Althorp, were written on the occasion of the death of Lord and Lady Spencer's second

"HARROW, *June 28th*, 1791. 1791-2. Æt. 9-10.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I have found a place at the butts where I can get writing sand. I expect my birds will hatch to-day, but I do not depend on it, as we should always observe the old proverb, never reckon your chickens before they are hatched. There was a fair here on Wednesday. I send you two verses made from English, the subject is Soror.*

Chara soror, quis non cœnam miratur opimam?
Calceolosque novos gens fere tota crepat.

"My duty to Mama and love to Sister.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"ALTHORP, *September 1st*, 1791.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I have got a squirrel that will draw a cart. The castle is finished, and the cannon were fired and colours hoisted to-day, because it is your birthday. I wish you joy.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *March 4th*, 1792.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I am sorry to tell you, my birds have wasted all their stuff, without building any nest, and now they sing, because all their stuff is gone. When do you go to London? There is a boy going to do twenty nonsense verses to show up on Monday. I am going to have a

son, Richard, which took place at Althorp, on the 20th. He was a child under two years old. This was the first death in the family. A daughter, Lady Harriet, died an infant, in 1793.—AUTHOR.

* These refer to two drawings, still extant, of Lady Sarah Spencer, by her mother, one intituled "Nice Supper," the other "New Shoes." —LORD LYTTELTON.

1792–3. Æt.10-11.

copy read over on Monday, and it consists of twenty-eight verses. Mrs. Bromley let me and Mr. Ponsonby have a good run to-day for two hours, and we both got dirty up to the knees. There are some boys who say, they will come and see me at Easter. It only wants a month to-day to the breaking up of the school. Only think, J. Pon. can do a nonsense verse; he began by doing a dactyl and a spondee first for an ending, and then he made two feet with a syllable over for a beginning, and then he made the two remaining feet, and then there was a verse, and then he made a verse altogether, and this boy, that is to do twenty verses, began at the same time with Mr. Ponsonby.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *September* 30*th*, 1792.

"DEAR PAPA,

"We dined upon a goose yesterday as it was Michaelmas-day. I had a letter from Nan, and she wants me to come there to see the curiosities of Wales. She says, the porpoises come in, in great flocks against stormy weather, and it is fine amusement to see them run races in the water; you might have good sport in shooting them. My duty to Mama, love to Sal, kiss to Bob.*

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *November* 10*th*, 1792.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I can skip a great deal better than I could, because Tom Hodges has given me a lecture, and is going to give me one till I can skip; the way is this: first, when he saw I could not skip at all, he skip'd himself, then he told me to jump without a rope; when I could do that, he

* Afterwards Captain the Hon. Sir Robert Spencer, K.C.H.

told me to do the same with one, but I jumped too late for the rope. Then he told me to jump when the rope was over my head, which, when I did, I jumped over it. My duty to Mama, love to Sal, and kiss to Bob. 1793-4. Æt. 11-12.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

"HARROW, *March 19th*, 1793.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I am very glad to hear that Bob can speak a little now, and I hope he will be taught to say Bro' before the holidays. I hope you received Mr. Bromley's letter in time (*i. e.* before you came to London), that I may bring my army to fight the French if they attack Spencer House in the holidays. My duty to Mama, love to Sal, kiss to Harriet and Bob.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP.

"P.S. I should like very much to ride home this time, if my horse could come."

"HARROW, *June 30th*, 1793.

"DEAR PAPA,

"My silkworms have grown very much since I have given them mulberry leaves; and I have given up blackbirds, because the silkworms cost me threepence a week; now they eat mulberry leaves; and cost the boy, I go shares with, the same. On the second speech day, I planted some slips off my African myrtle, one of which has taken root, I believe, because there are some new leaves come out upon it. It wanted a month to the holidays yesterday. Tell John I hope he has gone on with the Jackbuilt, because she is quite seasoned enough. My duty to Mama, love to Sal, and kiss to Bob.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP.

1794. Æt. 12.

"HARROW, *May 26th*, 1794.

"DEAR PAPA,

"I have got a nest of three young greenfinches, and two old ones, who feed the young ones, whenever they want it, and it is very pretty to see them; they have learnt how to fly now, and I mean to teach them to sing by sister's organ; and I have got two young sky-larks, who, I expect, will sing well. I believe, you have seen one Mrs. Bromley had at her door, that she gave a half guinea for. Lord Duncannon has got three skylarks, two titlarks, and two sparrows; I went after a bird's nest with him yesterday, the birds were flown, and we got wet through into the bargain. We have eat a gooseberry pie out of the garden. I have heard something of the Duke of York being surrounded and cutting his way out again, and I think of his being wounded. I shall be obliged to you, if you will tell me when any news comes, because I should like to hear it. My Johnson's Dictionary is of great use to me in reading Blair's sermons, because there are so many fine words I cannot understand.

"I suppose you are all at Althorp now. My duty to Mama, love to Sal and Bob.

"I am your dutiful Son,

"ALTHORP."

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These letters may be pronounced rather trifling, but it must be recollected that they were written by a mere boy, in what we are now apt to consider the dark ages of public school education. They give colour and reality to the picture I have endeavoured to draw of Lord Althorp's boyhood, and in preserving them I am confident that I have done no injustice to his memory.

## CHAPTER III.

### COMPANIONS AT HARROW.

Lord Althorp was fortunate in the time that he went to Harrow. The school has, perhaps beyond any other, been subject to the vicissitudes which attend the progress of our great public places of education. Had Lord Althorp gone there a few years earlier, he would have found it labouring under the disadvantages of a reduced number of boys, and the absence of the public favour, certain indications of a defective system of management. From this state of depression it had been raised by Dr. Drury, through whose efforts a decided revival of scholarship and emulation had been accomplished among the boys; so that, during the last ten years of the century, which comprised the period of Lord Althorp's stay there, it may be asserted that Harrow produced more young men who afterwards made a figure in the world, than at any other decade of her history; the most eminent of them, Lord Byron and Sir Robert Peel, were too much his juniors to have been intimate with him. It may be interesting to cast a glance at some of his contemporaries and friends.

Companions at Harrow.

Hon. Frederick Robinson.

In the same form, and only two above him, was the Honourable Frederick Robinson (second son of Lord Grantham, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in Lord Shelburne's Ministry). He was an excellent scholar for his age, and shone particularly in composition, his exercises being not less remarkable for the ease with which he dispatched them, than for their brilliancy. The pride and favourite of the masters, he had likewise the singular good fortune to be popular among his school-fellows, with whom his gaiety served as an antidote to the jealousy which, even at schools, often attaches to superior merit. Without being at all handsome, his countenance had an ingenuous and pleasing expression, his blue eyes beaming with intelligence and good humour. His future attainment of very high distinction in public life was confidently predicted by the general voice of the school. He fully maintained his reputation at Cambridge, where he won, against severe competition, the Chancellor's Gold Medal for English verse. In the House of Commons he soon met with great success. If adverse critics charged him with shallow reasoning and a diffuse diction, his clear and flowing style, and copiousness of illustration, with the art which he certainly possessed of enlivening even dry subjects of finance with classical allusions and pleasant humour, made his speeches always acceptable to a large majority of his hearers. By some he was at one time preferred even to Sir Robert Peel, whom, it should not be forgotten, he preceded in the great question of Commercial

Reform. In an evil hour, at Mr. Canning's urgent request, he accepted a peerage with the leadership of the House of Lords, a post at this juncture little adapted to nerves which had all that delicacy of texture often found with a fine imagination. Left alone to combat an Opposition of almost unparalleled strength, his courage and powers equally deserted him. Upon an attack from Lord Londonderry, I recollect his once even bursting into tears. With his fame thus tarnished by failure, he was forced into the Premiership, after its rejection by Lord Harrowby, but with colleagues of opposite views and opposite interests, mutually exasperated by years of party warfare, the early dissolution of his "tesselated Cabinet" was inevitable. He met the catastrophe ungracefully, and the position thus lost was never recovered. When Colonial Secretary under Lord Grey, he was not able to face the great question of Negro Emancipation; and after showing strange vacillation in Council, he yielded, not however, as he admits, without reluctance, to Lord Grey's desire that he should resign the seals in favour of Lord Stanley.* With his usual kindliness of intention, he subsequently undertook the charge of the Bill in the House of Lords, but had scarcely proceeded beyond the few first sentences of his speech, when he hesitated and sat down, utterly unable to proceed, much to the dismay of his colleagues, and the astonishment of the House. The subordinate offices he more recently filled in Sir Robert Peel's Adminis-

* See Lord Ripon's Letter to the "Times," February, 1855.

tration were unaccompanied by any influence in the Cabinet, and on the retirement of that statesman, he withdrew entirely from politics.

Viscount Duncannon.

Another boy of a different stamp, Viscount Duncannon (eldest son of the Earl of Bessborough), was also in the same class, being two below his cousin and intimate friend, Lord Althorp. Their close connexion through life, both personal and political, induces me to dwell at some length on his character. It then gave little promise, for with a phlegmatic temperament, great taciturnity, and a slowness of utterance almost amounting to a natural impediment, he showed no aptitude for instruction, and though fairly industrious, was regarded as fortunate in being able to keep in the current which bore him, with difficulty, through the various gradations of the school.* He was apparently not more successful at Oxford, as I have been unable to trace him, even in the throng of students whose names only are recorded in the University Calendars.

With these inauspicious antecedents, Lord Duncannon entered into public life; and it will be a gratifying task to me, who long enjoyed and valued his friendship, to show how creditably he acquitted himself in it. The future statesman, however, narrowly escaped being a "détenu" instead. His father having sent him abroad during the short peace, the intelligence of approaching hostilities reached him in a distant part of Italy. Any inter-

* A copy of very fair Latin verses by him has been found at Althorp.—Lord Lyttelton.

ference with English travellers was then by no means generally apprehended, and most of them confided in the assurances of security given by the local authorities. Not so Lord Duncannon. Viewing the case in a different light, and acting on his own judgment, he hastened to the nearest port, travelling night and day, as he could find the means of conveyance, for nearly a fortnight, until he reached Marseilles. There he embarked in the first vessel that sailed for England, barely four and twenty hours before the promulgation of the order for the detention of his countrymen.

The decision and correctness of judgment displayed on this occasion by Lord Duncannon were the prominent features of his character, and to these he mainly owed his success in life. No sooner had he entered into politics, than he took his line. Conscious of the imperfections of his delivery, it was long before he ventured to make a speech in the House; and then it was only one in explanation, and very brief. Nor did he do more when high in office, although what he said was always indulgently received. To atone for his silence, he was indefatigable in his attendance and observation of what was taking place in Parliament, so that, to use the words of Bishop Burnet in describing Sir Edward Seymour, "he knew the House and every one in it so well, that by looking about him, he could tell the fate of any question."* This, coupled with his high connexions, led to his selection for the very trouble-

* Burnet's Own Times, v. ii. p. 70.

some post of manager, or, as it is familiarly termed, whipper-in of the Opposition; and although his manners were cold, if not forbidding, and he had little of the address or dexterity which distinguished the Tory whipper-in, Mr. Holmes, he contrived, by the exercise of more honest arts, especially a great readiness to oblige, and strict fidelity to his engagements, to be eminently successful. After thus serving an apprenticeship of nearly a quarter of a century in the House, with scarcely a prospect of office, his appointment to the Secretaryship of the Treasury, on the accession of Lord Grey's Ministry, seemed quite a matter of course; and the narrowness of his income, owing to the gross improvidence of his father, made it of great importance to him: but he yielded without a murmur to the claims of Mr. Ellice, and unlike Lord Carnarvon and other Whig chiefs, whose exclusion from power was followed by the immediate abandonment of their principles, he continued to serve the cause with unabated zeal. Accordingly, his nomination to the chair of the Woods and Forests in 1832, upon the retirement of Lord Dover, was generally treated as an act of justice too long withheld. The public were a little startled at his admission into the Cabinet in the following year, and his promotion to the seals of the Home Department shortly afterwards; but the feeling soon died away in the general recognition of his usefulness. This appeared not so much in the higher walks of statesmanship, as in his superintendence of the elections, the distribution of

patronage, and the internal working of various departments of the Government. His extensive connexions in the Liberal party, especially among the middle classes, kept him always intimately conversant with their sentiments, which his colleagues, from their different habits of society, knew very imperfectly; and the correct estimate he usually took of the public mind on political questions was perfectly marvellous. He was the directing spirit, if not the soul and mainstay, of Lord Melbourne's Irish policy, the chief title of that administration to credit from posterity. Residing a good part of the year on his Irish estates, which he managed admirably, he was known and highly esteemed throughout the country. The leaders of the Catholic party had for many years regarded him as their friend and protector: indeed he was the only Whig politician who possessed any real influence over them. Thus the thread of the negotiations between them and the Whigs, from 1835 to 1847, fell entirely into his hands, and he succeeded where many very clever diplomatists would have failed; for it was not discretion and tact alone, but the rarer qualities of unflinching resolution, a remarkable command of temper, and the closest adherence to truth, which made him more than a match for Mr. O'Connell. That very able and crafty man, who made no scruple to betray Lord Hatherton and other Whig statesmen, always kept faith with Lord Duncannon.

Lord Duncannon had a deliberate and decided

manner of expressing himself, which carried great weight, even with those least disposed to give up their opinion. No coldness or discouragement could silence him; and often have I known the Whigs, especially whilst in Opposition, saved from very serious blunders by his firm, and almost pertinacious remonstrances. It is singular, that with this independent spirit, he was a favourite at Court. The King frequently consulted him, both on public affairs and his own private concerns, one of which, I recollect, was the settlement of some very unpleasant differences with Lord Munster. When the Government was displaced, Lord Duncannon was the only Minister on parting with whom the King showed any emotion.

The famine of 1846 has cast a long and dark shade over his Irish Administration. It was necessarily a period of almost unparalleled distress to the great body of the people. Some political economists have asserted that the interference of the State, on the whole, did more harm than good, and I suspect that Lord Bessborough, if uncontrolled by the Cabinet, would not have shrunk from the bold experiment of leaving the people to work out their own preservation. The system of public works, which he sanctioned and partly originated, was a crude and ill-digested measure, based on questionable principles, and a contracted view of the national interests. When I once urged upon him the superior advantage of a well-organised system of advances for the employment of labour, on the

drainage, and general improvement of private property, his only reply was, that this would be benefiting the Irish landlord at the public expense, which he could never allow—thus entirely overlooking the fact, that in guarding against jobbery on the part of the landlord, he benefited nobody, and that the aid he gave was attended with all the demoralising result of mere charitable contributions. One important fact in his favour, however, ought not to be overlooked. The Duke of Newcastle had taken great pains to collect, in a tour through Ireland, all the objections he could raise to Lord Bessborough's proceedings, with a view to a hostile motion in the Lords, but on laying his case before Sir Robert Peel, the advice he received was "*to do nothing.*"

Praise is justly due to the firmness, not less than the humanity, with which he administered the government at this most critical period. When the waggons of corn just landed from England had been attacked by the populace, some of his advisers naturally shrank from the idea of shedding the blood of those famishing and misguided men. Lord Bessborough, without entering into any discussion, sat down, calmly wrote an order for the troops immediately to put down the disturbance at all risks, and dispatched it to the officer in command. This promptness of action had the desired effect, and the outrage was never repeated. Any vacillation at that moment, with such people as the Irish, might have led to an agrarian war.

Lord Bessborough died at his post; his days

having no doubt been shortened by his devotedness to its duties. As soon as he perceived his recovery to be hopeless, he dictated a letter to Lord John Russell, earnestly recommending Lord Clarendon for his successor; and, ill as he was, the favourable reply gave him most lively satisfaction. He transacted business almost to the last. After having received the Sacrament, he took leave of his children, recommending the younger ones urgently to the care of their eldest brother, whose promise to attend to their welfare left him, he said, "without any further anxiety;" and, indeed, his resignation and fortitude under the sufferings that marked his illness were very remarkable.

The following notice of Lord Bessborough was furnished to me by his friend and colleague, the Right Hon. Henry Labouchere (afterwards Lord Taunton): *

"Lord Bessborough exercised, during many years, an influence with the Whig Party, which was not due to any powers of debate, or what is ordinarily understood by habits of business, but to qualities of a rarer sort, which impressed all who had opportunities of observing them.

"He was eminently gifted with sagacity and

* Mr. Labouchere resigned on Lord Bessborough's death, and succeeded Lord Clarendon at the Board of Trade. His administration of that department was distinguished by important Reforms, such as the Merchant Seaman's Act, the Merchant Seaman's Fund Act, and above all the Repeal of the Navigation Act, which he introduced in a very able speech, and carried in spite of the violent opposition of the Shipping interest—happily, as it proved, both for themselves and the nation.—AUTHOR.

honour. These qualities endeared him to his friends, and obtained for him the unbounded confidence of his party. When events placed him in the station of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at a period of great public difficulty and danger, their effect became more extensively conspicuous and useful. He was thoroughly trusted by all classes of Irishmen. Whigs, Tories, Catholics, and Orangemen, all communicated with him frankly and without reserve, and looked to the Castle with a confidence, hitherto unknown, except by the peculiar party which believed its own banner to be displayed there. What his share was in mitigating the horrors of famine, in the disastrous year of 1846, and in curbing the disturbances which, at one time, threatened to aggravate them, can only be fully known by those who were then officially connected with him; but how well he was loved and appreciated by the people of Ireland, was apparent to all who witnessed the demeanour of the multitudes who lined the quays of Dublin, as his funeral procession passed through them."

Lord de Mauley.

Lord Duncannon had two brothers, much younger than himself, at the same time, at Harrow; the younger, William Ponsonby, afterwards Lord de Mauley, was amiable and well-looking, and is remembered among his contemporaries for the fluency with which he could speak French. He was removed at an early age to go into the navy, in which, however, he remained but a short time. Having married the only daughter of Lord Shaftesbury,

he came into possession of great estates in Dorsetshire, and represented that county in Parliament, before he was raised to the Peerage.

The Hon. Frederick Ponsonby.

Frederick, the elder, became afterwards a Knight of the Bath, Lieutenant-General, and Governor of Malta, and, what is still higher, one of the favourite associates and officers of the Duke of Wellington, whom he followed from the beginning of the Peninsular War to the battle of Waterloo. He also had the distinction of being one of the general-officers selected by the Duke to assist him in his annual inspection of the Flemish fortresses, under the Treaty of Paris. His boyhood was far from brilliant. Indolent and careless, he, perhaps, never gave an hour to his studies, except from compulsion, and was proportionately deficient in knowledge; but the sweetness of his disposition, and his prepossessing manners, made him a general favourite. He had a fine person, with an oval, well-formed face; but the mild expression of his large blue eyes, and an almost feminine cast of features, gave no indication of the qualities which subsequently made him one of the most daring and skilful cavalry officers of his day. It may be observed that his popularity clung to him through life; and in all his employments, military and civil, he was singularly beloved.

Viscount Royston.

Another boy of more than common abilities, whose early death alone prevented his rising to distinction, Viscount Royston, the eldest son of the Earl of Hardwicke,—was also in the same form. He had gone to Harrow in 1795, being then eleven

years old. In scholarship he was fully equal to Mr. Robinson; indeed, he seems to have carried more Greek with him to Cambridge than any of his contemporaries, for at the age of nineteen he had composed his translation of the "Cassandra," of Lycophron,—a work which has perhaps no parallel, except in the precocious performances of Barratier. It has been commended by Porson, one of the few scholars conversant with the obscure original. This publication sufficiently explains Lord Royston's sedentary habits, and his associating little with his schoolfellows, or sharing in their amusements, for which, indeed, ill-health often disqualified him, as he was of a delicate and consumptive habit, and quite unequal to much muscular exertion. His extreme shyness prevented his making a figure in the public examinations, and he passed as more studious than clever. This injustice was amply repaired at Cambridge, where he found himself quite in his element. Modest and amiable, devoted to classical studies, and delighting in the company of men of kindred tastes, he was warmly welcomed among them. If their estimate of his merits is to be received, he was not less remarkable for the spirit and originality of his conversation, than for his great attainments in Greek and Latin literature. It had not been forgotten that his grandfather and uncle, during their residence at the same college, had distinguished themselves by writing the "Athenian Letters,"* and much higher things

* The Athenian Letters, or the supposed correspondence of an agent

were expected of him. His first step, however, on leaving the University, excited some surprise, it being no less than a tour in Russia; few Englishmen then caring to trust themselves in a country, of which only some favoured spots had yet emerged from a state of barbarism, and where travelling was attended with numberless inconveniences, and some risk.

In spite of the remonstrances of his friends, who saw, in his delicate frame and almost valetudinarian habits, little fitness for such an enterprise, he persisted in his plans. He passed the spring of 1806 between St. Petersburg and Moscow, more oppressed than gratified by the hospitality of the Russian nobles, whose gates flew open at the approach of a young English nobleman. As soon as the season admitted, he sailed down the Volga to Astracan, and, proceeding across the steppes, he reached, after a long and dreary route, the skirts of the Caucasus, experiencing occasionally the hospitality of the Lesgee chiefs, and stopping at various places of

of the King of Persia residing at Athens, during the Peloponnesian War.' It is on the same plan as the celebrated Travels of Anacharsis, written by Barthélemi, nearly fifty years afterwards. As a juvenile production, it is highly creditable to its authors, being interspersed with agreeable descriptions, and the vehicle of much useful historical information. It was suggested, I suspect, by the Turkish Spy. Works of this character were very popular during the last century. The taste for them has long since gone by. The Athenian Letters were republished by Lord Hardwicke, in two volumes quarto. This nobleman was also a lover of literature, as well as a statesman. He filled the post of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, under Mr. Pitt. His three sons all died before him. The last was a schoolfellow of mine at Eton, where he showed cleverness and intelligence. He died of a fever, after a short illness, in 1810.—AUTHOR.

interest, until he found himself at Derbend, on the shores of the Caspian. He also passed some time in Georgia. Such were the hardships he encountered, that three out of the four servants who accompanied him from Moscow, sank under disease or fatigue; and he likewise narrowly escaped falling into the hands of the Tartars. Once he passed the corpses of a dozen Cossacks, who had been murdered a few days before by the banditti. All this while, he contrived to cultivate his favourite pursuits,—his translation of Lycophron was continually before him, and some Greek anapæsts which he wrote in the album at Trothatta are so elegant that I cannot doubt his having maintained the habit of frequent composition. His letters to his friends at this period are not unworthy of comparison with those of Tweddell and Heber, written from the same countries a few years before. Their freshness and intelligence show a fine and highly cultivated mind. It appears from them that Lord Royston, not dispirited by the hardships he had undergone, contemplated some stay in the East, for he writes to his father:—

"My next excursion, before I proceed to the Northern Provinces of Persia, will be for a short distance into the desert, to the habitation of a Calmuck Prince. I wish to see the manner of living of the chiefs of that nation, and to take the diversion of hawking with the Princess his daughter; who, with a pipe in her mouth, hunts on the unbroken horses of the desert."

It proved, however, that he had much over-estimated his strength. A dangerous fever, common

to the country, overtook him, and he was so reduced that any extension of his tour was rendered impossible. He reluctantly retraced his steps, and having reached Hamburg in safety, his friends were fondly preparing to welcome his return, when the intelligence arrived, that he had perished in a storm off Memel in Prussia, on the night of the 6th of April, 1808.*

Charles Pepys (afterwards Earl of Cottenham).

The list of Harrovians would be incomplete, without some notice of a youth in a higher form than Lord Althorp, but long his familiar acquaintance and political associate, Charles Pepys, afterwards Earl of Cottenham and Lord Chancellor. His father, Sir William Pepys, Baronet, a Master in Chancery, whose name is often mentioned in works of Lord Lyttelton, Miss Burney, and other writers of their school, with exaggerated praise as a poet and a wit, was unquestionably a man of very polished manners and refined taste, and

* Dr. Clarke, in the Preface to his Travels, says: "Lord Royston's name carries with it a claim to public consideration, although a knowledge of his great acquirements had scarcely transpired beyond the circle of his academical acquaintances; his erudition was regarded, even by a Porson, with wonder. The loss sustained by his death can never be repaired; but some consolation is derived from the consciousness, that all the fruits of his literary labours have not been annihilated. The sublime prophecy of his own Cassandra, 'uttering a parable of other times,' will yet be heard in her native language, showing 'her dark speech,' and thus portraying his melancholy end:

"'Ye plains where Phorcyn broods upon the deep,
And founds his floating palaces, what sobs
Of dying men shall ye not hear, what groans
Of masts and wrecks all crashing to the wind;
What mighty waters, whose receding waves,
Bursting, shall rive the continents of earth.'"—AUTHOR.

made no insignificant figure in the brilliant society immortalised by Boswell. He educated his three sons at home, before sending them to Harrow, instructing them himself, reading with them, and sparing no efforts to give them the accomplishments in which it had been the great object of his life to excel. With the eldest* and youngest,† he, to some extent, succeeded; and yet, so fallacious are human calculations, they owed their position in life entirely to the brilliant fortunes of their brother, who resembled his father as little, as the impracticable Mr. Stanhope did the elegant and versatile Lord Chesterfield. Charles Pepys was a stout, sturdy, thickset boy, of blunt speech and cold disposition, aiming at no distinction, making few friends, and exhibiting no traces of the peculiar discipline to which paternal care had subjected him. His proficiency in scholarship was respectable, but unaccompanied by a spark of genius. No

* Afterwards Sir William Pepys, Bart. Like his father, he was a good classical scholar, and wrote excellent Latin verses. From delicacy of constitution, he entered little into society, and was neither in a profession nor in Parliament. He usually resided at his seat in the country, near Godstone, in Surrey, highly esteemed by his neighbours as an accomplished and amiable gentleman, but somewhat of a hypochondriac. He, like most men of that temperament in the days of reform, had no love for the Whigs; but he was proud of his brother, to whom, on dying unmarried, he left his estate.—AUTHOR.

† Henry Pepys, Bishop of Worcester,—a prelate of respectable character, comely presence, and dignified demeanour. He lived in obscurity as Rector of West Mill, under the shadow of the Hardwicke family, for many years, well esteemed, though with no prospect of preferment; until, as the brother of Lord Chancellor Cottenham, he obtained a mitre, and narrowly missed the Archbishopric of York. He published a biographical account of Lord Royston, containing some interesting letters of that nobleman.—AUTHOR.

one could say that he was clever; some of his schoolfellows pronounced him dull. His dark, searching eyes, massive forehead, and expressive lips, refuted the charge; and he had an air of independence and determination which indicated an inward consciousness of superiority. Lord Althorp used to relate an anecdote of his intrepidity, which is worth preserving. At the beginning of winter, before the ice was considered fit for skating, most of the boys collected on the margin of a pond at Harrow, discussing whether it would be safe to venture upon it. Lord Althorp suddenly called out, that if any boy would take his hand he was ready to make the experiment. No sooner had he spoken, than Charles Pepys, although the heaviest boy in the school, rushed forward, and without saying a word, took his hand. They at once started, and soon found the undertaking to be attended with some peril, the ice bending and cracking under them as they proceeded; and it was to the surprise and exultation of the bystanders, that they reached the opposite bank in safety. They were heartily cheered on the occasion, and perhaps as highly gratified, as when, some thirty years afterwards, I saw them, one as Solicitor-General, and the other as Chancellor of the Exchequer, greeted by shouts of applause at the Guildhall, for their share in the Reform Bill.

Mr. Pepys made no figure at the University, and it was only after some years' standing at the Bar, that he attracted notice as a lawyer of sound,

though not showy parts, and of indefatigable industry. His practice gradually became considerable, and he devoted himself to it so exclusively, that in accepting a seat in Parliament from the Whigs, he insisted on being left to his own discretion as to attendance in the House; a privilege which he used with such freedom, as to lose in the eyes of his party all claims to the honours of his profession. These had, indeed, been already pledged to other lawyers of at least equal eminence, and greater political activity; so that within a very few years of his attaining the highest eminence in his profession, he was scarcely thought of as among the possible candidates for it. "Famâ, spe, veneratione, potius omnes destinabantur imperio quam quem futurum principem Fortuna in occulto tenebat."* His rise, however, when it once began, was so rapid, and the succession of accidental circumstances to which he owed it, so remarkable, that it might have been ascribed solely to the favour of Fortune, if it had not been eventually justified by the great powers which it unexpectedly brought to light. The first step in his advancement occurred in 1833, when he had been scarcely three years in Parliament. Sir William Horne, then Attorney-General, had long been in high repute as a leader in the Court of Chancery; but, having failed in the House of Commons, and forfeited the confidence of the Government by his indolence in official business, he was abruptly

* Tacit. Hist., lib. iii., c. 18.

displaced at the instigation of Sir J. Campbell, who, being then Solicitor, was impatient to be Attorney, General; and in the dearth which at that time existed of Whig lawyers, rather than from any great idea that was entertained of his capacity for office, Mr. Pepys was appointed to the vacant place of Solicitor-General. In the following year, the Mastership of the Rolls becoming vacant, by the death of Sir J. Leach, it was expected to devolve according to established usage on Sir J. Campbell, as the first law officer of the Crown; but a strong feeling having grown up about that date, of the importance of selecting Equity Judges from the ranks of the Equity, rather than of the Common Law Bar, his claims were, in deference to public opinion, overruled; and nearly the last act of Lord Brougham, before he resigned the Great Seal in 1834, was the appointment of Sir Charles Pepys, as Master of the Rolls.* Here, in the ordinary course of things, his promotion would have stopped, as had been the case with all his predecessors except Lord Lyndhurst; but the differences unhappily prevailing among the Whig leaders on their return to office, in 1835, having caused the Great Seal to be put into commission,† he was pitched upon as the person whose nomina-

* Lord Brougham having received private intelligence of the vacancy, filled it up instantly, to stop applications which he had determined to refuse.—AUTHOR.

† Was this the fact? I have been informed that the Great Seal was put into commission with the view of avoiding (as far as possible) the giving of offence to Lord Brougham. See also "Lives of the Chancellors," by Lord Campbell, v. viii. p. 467.—EDITOR.

tion to the Chief Commissionership would be the least offensive to Lord Brougham; and when at the expiration of the year the objections to Lord Brougham's re-appointment had not been removed, and the office could remain no longer in this state of partial abeyance, it was rather ungraciously conferred on him,* not without some misgivings as to his qualifications for it.

This wonderful elevation, however, he soon proved to be not beyond his merits; while yet at the Rolls he had given an earnest of those high judicial qualities, which shone out, still more conspicuously, after his promotion to the Woolsack. His knowledge of English Law was accurate and profound. Though his practice had been exclusively in the Court of Chancery, he was well versed also in the Common Law and its procedure, having spent several years of his studentship for the Bar in the chambers of a special pleader. He had an acute and logical understanding, in which subtilty of discrimination was so nicely balanced by strong common sense, that it never betrayed him into over-refinement, or clouded his judgment. Hence his decision was prompt, and when once formed, was not easily shaken. In that point lay his superiority as a judge to Lord Eldon, whose turn for speculative disquisition, while it led him to scatter broad and vivid lights on all sides of the

* The Attorney-General resigned in anger, on hearing of the appointment; but Lord Melbourne, with many compliments, offered him a peerage for his wife, and he relented, and remained in office. Some of the Cabinet wished to make Mr. Bickersteth Chancellor.—AUTHOR.

case which he had to decide, yet in the case itself perplexed his mind with doubts, and occasioned a vacillation of judgment, which was a fruitful source of delay to the suitors; so that it may be doubted whether he would not have been better fitted for a philosophical jurist, than for a practical administrator of the law. The genius of Lord Cottenham, on the other hand, lay rather in action than in speculation: when he indulged in disquisitions, and some of his judgments abound in them, it was always for the purpose of elucidating his view of the case before him, not of starting incidental or extraneous questions. Hence, his judgments were at once business-like and philosophical: sound determinations of the particular rights at issue, and, at the same time, treasures of legal knowledge and instruction to the general practitioner and the student. The style of them, like the character of the man, was perfectly free from all affectation and display; whether written or spoken, they were always simple, terse, and perspicuous; clear and condensed in their summary of facts, and in their exposition of law, comprehensive and vigorous, but at the same time, cautious and precise. In those which he pronounced extempore, his delivery was too rapid to admit of much attention either to the choice of his words, or to the structure of his sentences; but his written judgments, though aspiring to none of the graces of composition, possessed all the highest attributes of the judicial style; not the least of which was a very sparing use of

figurative or metaphorical language, which in subjects requiring logical precision is so fertile a source of fallacy and misconception. In all branches of his jurisdiction he exhibited the qualities of a consummate judge, but in none so conspicuously as upon questions relating to the Reformed Municipal Corporations, and to great Railway and other Companies, which sprang up in such numbers during the period of his judicial career. The adjustment of the rights and obligations of these great bodies opened a new province of jurisprudence, in which he left a record of powers, which will bear comparison with those displayed by Lord Mansfield in the larger domain of commercial law. His demeanour in Court was not without a certain dignity, but its prominent feature was an austerity, amounting sometimes to harshness, which maintained his authority rather than conciliated esteem. Though he had strong likings and antipathies for certain members of his Bar, which he did not take sufficient pains to conceal, he had too much self-reliance, and too vigorous and independent a mind, to be subject to the influence of any particular advocate. Empty declamation and useless repetitions of the same topic by successive counsel found so little favour with him, that they gradually disappeared from his Court; but to all, of whatever age or standing, who had anything pertinent to offer, he was a patient and attentive listener, seldom interrupting an argument, except for the purpose of bringing it to an issue, by showing that he had detected its weak point. If he

had a failing as a judge, it consisted in an impatience of contradiction, and an undue jealousy of any impeachment of his opinion. It is true that the labour which he bestowed on his judgments warranted a more than ordinary degree of confidence in their correctness, and that the general accuracy of his mind, and his habitual caution, made him less liable than most men to mistakes of inadvertence; but the irritation which he often betrayed when errors, even of the latter kind, were imputed to him, and the struggles which he made to explain them away, produced an impression of disingenuousness, which tended to lessen the weight of his authority in those cases, by far the most numerous, in which the imputation was groundless.

It is much to be regretted that the great powers he showed in administering the law, were not applied to its improvement. His failure in this respect is a serious blot on his Chancellorship, as he certainly retarded for several years, by his repugnance to the task, reforms in his Court, which have since been accomplished by less able hands.

Unlike his immediate predecessors, Lords Eldon, Lyndhurst, and Brougham, Lord Cottenham shone only as a judge. The maintenance of his judicial reputation was the grand object of his ambition, and the one to which his energies were almost exclusively devoted. Hence, although he felt a lively interest in politics, and was what is called a strong party-man, he took but little part in the deliberations of the Council, and seldom spoke in the Lords. Still,

on occasions, when his opinion was desired by his colleagues, he never shrank from giving it, and, like his judgments, it was always honest, clear, bold, and decided. More than once, he was foremost to counsel resignation, although he prized the emoluments of office somewhat highly for so great a man.

The coldness of disposition and reserve which had characterised him at Harrow, clung to him through life. He concerned himself too little with the sympathies of others, to do many generous actions, or to have many friends. In the intercourse of domestic life he was simple and unaffected, the same as Lord Chancellor that he had been as a Junior Barrister; but, without being unamiable, he had "not the power to please," probably because he had not the desire. He cared little for general society, and less for that of learned and able men. His conversation generally turned on the topics of the day, which he discussed with much shrewdness; and the downright view he took, both of men and things, was often enlivened by a vein of dry humour which gave much zest to his remarks. There was not the same vivacity in his speeches. His life was pure and well-regulated, and, if not loved, he was highly esteemed in private, and admired in public.

His life was, no doubt, abridged by the labours of his office. When Solicitor-General, he once told me, that during twenty years he had been confined only one day to his room by indisposition. In 1841, the case was very different. He then described himself to me, as sinking under hard work, so that nothing

could have saved him but the dissolution of the Government. The few hours that he could allow himself for sleep were not sufficient after the labours of the day. Indeed, the work of Chancellor, he observed, was such, that the strength of no man was equal to it for more than two or three years. When I congratulated him on his leisure, he laughed, saying, that he should soon be able to dispense with it; and certainly it lasted longer than he thought necessary. On his return to office, he resumed his former habits of application; but being an older man, they told heavily on him, and it was generally remarked by the Bar, that his faculties were no longer what they had been in his first Chancellorship. The first serious symptom of decline was the rupture of one of the vessels in the throat, which happened during a debate in the House of Lords. It bled copiously, but he continued to conceal it until the House was up, when his brother, the Bishop of Worcester, shocked at seeing his handkerchief clotted with blood, asked him the cause, and received a careless answer; for neither then, or at any subsequent stage of his illness, did he betray any alarm, though perfectly aware of his danger. He struggled many months with his disorder before he could be prevailed upon to resign the seals. It was hoped that a warmer climate might restore his debilitated powers; and he accordingly passed a winter at Malta, but it was too late, and he died in Italy on his way back to England, in April, 1851.

Harrow speeches.

I shall close my account of Lord Althorp's school-

life with a list of the Harrow speeches, on the 14th of June, 1798, which has been kindly communicated to me by Admiral Lord Radstock, adding a brief notice of the subsequent career of the different speakers.

HARROW.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Lord Royston | (Medea) | Ovid. |
| 2. West | (Catiline, *ad suos*) | Sallust. |
| 3. Wilmot | (Darius, *ad suos*) | Quintus Curtius. |
| 4. Mr. Powys, jun. | (Buckingham) | Shakespeare. |
| 5. Mr. Leslie | (Sinon) | Virgil. |
| 6. Lord Duncannon | (Cæsar) | Sallust. |
| 7. Lord Althorp | (Cato) | Sallust. |
| 8. Mr. Powys | (The Bard) | Gray. |
| 9. Hon. F. Robinson | (Galgacus) | Tacitus. |
| 10. Ellison, sen. | (In Pisonem) | Cicero. |
| 11. Mr. Bouverie, sen. | Address to Jury against Williams | Lord Erskine's Speeches. |
| 12. Law | (Ajax) | Sophocles. |
| 13. Wightwick | (The Ghost in "Hamlet,") | Shakespeare. |

1. Lord Royston (see *supra*), lost at sea.

2. Mr. West was subsequently fellow of University College, Oxford. A Treatise on Rent, which still ranks as one of the most valuable contributions to political economy in the present century, introduced him to public notice; and Mr. Charles Wynn appointed him Chief Justice of Bombay, in 1822, when he was knighted. He was cut off in middle life by one of the disorders of the country, in 1828.

3. Sir Eardley Wilmot, Bart., for many years M.P. for Warwickshire. He was afterwards appointed Governor of Van Diemen's Land, and died there in 1847.

4. Mr. Powys, Jun., a brother of Lord Lilford; he went into the Church, and died in 1850.

5. Mr. Leslie, a son of the Countess of Rothes, by her second husband, Sir Lucas Pepys. He afterwards went into orders, and obtained a small living, where he passed a retired life, his health being very delicate. He succeeded to his father's baronetcy and fortune; the latter, as he died unmarried, descended to the children of his sister, the late Countess of Devon.

6. Lord Duncannon, afterwards Earl of Bessborough, and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

7. Lord Althorp; afterwards Chancellor of the Exchequer.

8. Mr. Powys, Senior, brother of Lord Lilford; he went into the Church, and died in 1842.

9. Mr. Robinson: Earl of Ripon, and Premier.

10. Mr. Ellison: elder brother of Cuthbert Ellison (of Hepburn, county of Durham, late M.P. for Newcastle). He died of an attack of measles, only two months after this very speech.

11. Mr. Bouverie, the third son of the Earl of Radnor. He died unmarried, in 1811.

12. Mr. Law, a son of the Archdeacon of Rochester, and afterwards rector of Standen, in Herts.

13. Mr. Wightwick: went into no profession. He established himself early in life, with some maiden sisters, at Sandgates, near Chertsey, in Surrey; a pretty seat, which he greatly embellished, and seldom quitted. He lived to a good old age, dividing his attention between his books and his garden, and administering justice and charity among

his poorer neighbours. The bulk of his property went to improve the fellowships which bear his name at Pembroke College, Oxford.

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1798–1800. Æt. 16-18.

Leaves Harrow.

HAVING reached the highest form, and on three occasions spoken at the Speeches, Lord Althorp was considered to have reaped all the benefit to be derived from Harrow; and accordingly he was removed, in the summer of 1798, with the view of being placed at Cambridge, as soon as he had received such instruction in mathematics as to enter on his studies there with advantage. A clergyman, bearing the character of a good mathematician, was engaged to reside in the house as his private tutor. The plan, however, totally failed. This gentleman unfortunately found the society and amusements of Spencer House and Althorp much more to his taste than explaining the elements of geometry and algebra to his pupil, and neither in precept or example was of the slightest service to him; so that this valuable interval between school and college was entirely wasted.

Lord Spencer had been educated at Trinity College, where he had gained distinction by his classical compositions; and he had an additional motive to place his son there, from his long intimacy with the Master, Bishop Mansel, who had been his fellow-collegian, and was, besides, a most zealous partisan of the Administration. Lord Althorp accordingly went up to Trinity for residence, in January, 1800.

# CHAPTER IV.

## COLLEGE LIFE.

1800-2. Æt. 18-20.

Lord Althorp goes up to Trin. Coll. Cambridge.

Lord Althorp passed upwards of two years at the University,* a longer period than was necessary for a nobleman under the academical regulations. I should have been glad to give some detail of his studies, pursuits, and friendships during that time, embracing as it does the transition from boyhood to manhood, when in the majority of instances the character receives impressions to which a long course of action in after-life may be traced. Unfortunately my materials are scanty and slight, being little more than some notes I happened to make of conversations with Lord Althorp, at a time when I little thought of preparing these Memoirs.

At Harrow, Lord Althorp had an excellent master, and an inefficient tutor; at Cambridge the case was reversed, as he was more fortunate in his tutor than in his master. The Bishop, indeed, was a man of talent and of the world. He owed his preferment mainly to his political influence, which had secured him the friendship of Mr. Pitt, and been tested in many a hard-fought election. The dignity and refinement of his manners were such as are sel-

* From January, 1800, to June, 1802.

dom to be found in College authorities. Yet he failed, through an utter inaptitude for his peculiar duties. He might have made some figure as a statesman or a courtier, but was quite out of his element at the head of a College. Accordingly he was content to follow the example of his predecessors, in regarding the mastership in the light of a sinecure with large patronage. Even the great Bentley is only remembered in Trinity for his indecent litigation with the Fellows respecting his privileges and emoluments. Whatever the Bishop thought it incumbent on him to do, was always done well. On all public occasions he was prepared with an eloquent speech. He administered censure or commendation to the undergraduates, when called on to do so by the tutors, with the most becoming effect; but as to directing their studies, or stimulating their industry, these seemed to be matters out of his province; and even Lord Althorp, in whom he had such strong motives to take an interest, derived no essential benefit from his countenance and protection.* 1800–2. Æt. 18-20.

Mr. Allen, whom Lord Spencer had chosen as his son's private tutor, at the recommendation of Bishop Pretyman, had the merit of honesty of purpose, kind temper, and sound scholarship. He had, at this Mr. Allen his private tutor.

* As the Bishop advanced in years, the slight supervision he had maintained over the College became irksome to him, and he withdrew into such seclusion, that during the three years I passed at Trinity, I never once had an opportunity of seeing him, and was only made aware of his existence by receiving an intimation that I had incurred his displeasure by walking across the College grass-plot, opposite his windows, *in loose pantaloons;* an offence which he visited with—the privation of ale and pudding for a fortnight.—AUTHOR.

1800–2. Æt. 18-20.

time, just been elected to a Fellowship, after taking the high degree of Fourth Wrangler; distinctions more creditable to his abilities from having been won with far less preparation than is usually required; for he had entered the College as a Fellow Commoner, with a large income, being the son of an opulent manufacturer in the north of England; and it was only in his second year, upon the unexpected bankruptcy of his father, that he paid any attention to study. The spirit with which he accommodated himself to this reverse of fortune, as he at once exchanged his silk gown for a stuff one, gave up his horses, and reduced his expenditure to the lowest scale of living at the College, bespoke no common strength of character, and excited a general interest in his favour throughout the University.

Wealth and rank present great obstacles to the acquirement of knowledge, in all Universities. At Cambridge, under the vicious system which prevailed half a century ago, these obstacles had become almost insurmountable. Students of noble family were exempted from any examination for their Degrees; and, as if ignorance was essential to nobility, they were not even allowed to enter into the competition for honours. Their attendance at College Lectures was not enforced; and they enjoyed a degree of licence that certainly would not have been tolerated in a well-regulated home. Most of these youths frequented Newmarket, and indulged in a lavish expenditure ill-suited to their years; the majority left the University in debt. So long as they

1800–2.
Æt. 18-20.

preserved appearances by abstaining from gross excesses, they escaped all academical censure. Such was the last stage of education, such the introduction into life, which the English aristocracy provided for their sons at the beginning of the nineteenth century.*

The society in which Lord Althorp now found himself consisted of young men of his own rank, who fully availed themselves of their academical privileges.

Fortunately for him, his shyness prevented his making rapid friendships. He also had a strong sense of duty and a docile disposition; and with the habits of application he had brought from Harrow, he might, under skilful management, have been easily induced to employ himself to advantage. But such inducements were not to be expected from Mr. Allen, who, like most Cambridge tutors, having been a student from compulsion rather than inclination, had little genuine love of knowledge, and was utterly incapable of exciting such a feeling in his pupil. He would have been well pleased to see him eager for improvement, but did not feel conscious that it was part of his duty to make him so. Finding his conduct regular, and his attendance for tuition not often interrupted, he thought this a great deal to obtain from a young nobleman, and did not require more.

* Many persons, within my own knowledge, have felt, through life, considerable inconvenience from debts thus contracted at College. Their amount, in some instances, was almost incredible. An acquaintance of mine, the son of a Kentish baronet, actually kept a pack of hariers.—AUTHOR.

I think the person referred to was Sir H. Oxenden.—EDITOR.

1800–2. Æt. 18-20. This mistaken forbearance bore its natural fruits in the increasing mediocrity of Lord Althorp's performances in classics and mathematics, so that it soon could not be disguised from either tutor, or pupil, that their interviews were to very little purpose; indeed, Lord Althorp told me that he was very idle through the whole of the first term of his residence.

1800. Æt. 18. College examinations.

At Easter, Lord Althorp went into Northamptonshire for his vacation, when Lady Spencer questioned him rather closely as to his pursuits at Cambridge, and to his astonishment, said that she had set her heart on his being in the first class, at the next college examination. This idea seemed to him quite preposterous, and as such he treated it. On returning to Trinity, he mentioned the conversation to Mr. Allen, who very properly took some pains to convince him, that the first class was within the reach of abilities inferior to his own, and that, backward as he happened to be in the College course, owing to his absence in the first, and his idleness in the second term, it only required steady application to ensure his success. Impressed by these arguments, and incited by the desire to gratify his mother, he from that day entered upon a course of laborious study, every occupation which interfered with it being at once resolutely abandoned. In fact, he became altogether a reading man. The heartiness with which he threw himself into his work astonished his tutor, whose energy was likewise proportionably increased, and certainly no efforts were spared on his part to direct and forward his pupil's

labours; which, indeed, he fully shared, as he always remained in the room while Lord Althorp worked, to be ready with an answer when any difficulty arose. Thus they proceeded with unabated zeal during the next two months; at the expiration of which Mr. Allen's predictions were fully verified, as Lord Althorp acquitted himself very creditably in the examination, and was not only placed in the first class, but high in it.

1800-2. Æt. 18-20.

Is placed in the first class in his first year.

This success was of great value to him. In some degree it determined the complexion of his life; for, as he once told me, had he failed, his energies would have been absorbed in hunting and shooting, like a promising scholar I recollect in my youth, whose feelings were so wounded by the bad reception given by the public to his first work, that he pettishly exclaimed:—"Henceforward, I shall preserve my eyes for woodcocks!" And he scarcely opened a book afterwards, although he lived to a good old age at the University, in the enjoyment of a rich Fellowship.*

Lord Althorp had hitherto felt a distrust of his own powers, to a degree that materially interfered with their exercise, and his bashful, if not embarrassed, deportment had led his acquaintances to

* Dr. Shaw, one of the Senior Fellows of Magdalen. Not long after he had taken his degree, he published an edition of Apollonius Rhodius, in two volumes. Wyttenbach reviewed it in the Bibliotheca Critica, with a degree of bitterness and personal invective that might have served as a model for some of Mr. Croker's performances in the Quarterly. The work, no doubt, does not exhibit much critical sagacity; but considering the youth of the editor, his erudition was creditable, and he deserved encouragement, rather than censure.—AUTHOR.

1801. Æt. 19.

believe this distrust well founded. He was now encouraged to do himself more justice, and he received the same from others. Lady Spencer wisely seized the occasion to urge his perseverance in his studies for the first class in the second year, where the examination embraces a wider sphere of science and literature, and is indeed regarded as a fair test of academical proficiency; so that a high place in it seldom fails to be followed by a creditable Degree, and eventually a Fellowship—those great prizes of University ambition. Many young noblemen contrived to escape this examination altogether, by taking an honorary degree in the previous term, as Lord Althorp certainly would have done, but for his mother's interposition. At her earnest entreaty, however, he again sat down to his books, feeling this time, he told me, such confidence of success, that he considered himself at liberty to indulge some of his favourite tastes, such as an occasional day with the hounds in the neighbourhood, and a glimpse at Newmarket. With these slight interruptions, he worked as hard as before, and with such effect that he made a distinguished figure at the examination in June, 1801, being declared the first man of his year; a distinction which will be more justly appreciated when I mention that Mr. Parke (Mr. Baron Parke, and afterwards Lord Wensleydale) and Mr. Pryme, the Political Economy Professor at Cambridge, were among his competitors. These gentlemen subsequently took high Degrees—Mr. Parke being Fourth, and Mr. Pryme, Sixth Wrangler; and, as

Is first man of his year in his second year.

it generally happens that the order in which students stand in the College examinations at Trinity is maintained in the Senate House, it may be inferred how high Lord Althorp's name would have been in the list of honours, had noblemen been admitted into the public examination. 1801-2. Æt. 19-20.

Lord Spencer's official position and high rank, besides the unusual, if not unprecedented, circumstance of the first place in the first class at Trinity being gained by a nobleman, caused Lord Althorp's success to make considerable sensation in the University; and it was cited with exultation by the seniors in my day, when he had just begun to attract public notice by his speeches in Parliament.

Lord Althorp modestly ascribed his success to the excellence of his tutor's instruction; and certainly never was instruction better rewarded, as it afterwards procured for Mr. Allen the Livings of Battersea and St. Bride, with a Prebendal Stall at Rochester, and he closed his prosperous life as Bishop of Ely. That he was an amiable, well-disposed man cannot be doubted. His talents were not equally acknowledged, and he certainly seemed to have left them behind him at Cambridge; as Bishop Wilberforce once remarked to me, "He must have infused his whole mind into Lord Althorp."

The benefit resulting to Lord Althorp from this course of study, however limited, was considerable. Not only must his mind have been strengthened by the intellectual discipline inseparable from mathematical investigations, but he had gained a command

1801-2. Æt. 19-20.

over figures, which made all calculations easy to him ever afterwards. This materially aided him in his agricultural pursuits, for he not only kept his accounts with a minuteness and accuracy* that made them models of their kind, but simplified and abridged them by the use of algebraical formulæ. It was, however, as a member of the House of Commons, that Lord Althorp reaped most advantage from his industry at Cambridge. He was one of the few country members, to whom the long tables of figures in the Blue Books gave no alarm, and who could sound the depths of a financial proposition without assistance. Long before he even entertained an idea of office, he took a prominent part in the debates on the Currency and the Bank Charter, boldly combating the arguments of practical men who had made these questions a particular study. Hence, likewise, he escaped some of the difficulties which had beset Chancellors of the Exchequer in entering upon the very miscellaneous duties of that department. One of his predecessors, Sir Francis Dashwood, a clear and ready debater, found, it is said, a sum of five figures an impenetrable secret. Charles Townshend never trusted himself with the preparation of large financial operations. Even Mr. Pitt used to take a Treasury clerk into his confi-

* His exactness was such, that he once refused to pass the accounts of the Royal Agricultural Society, of which he was President, on detecting an error of threepence in the balance-sheet, and actually spent four hours with Colonel Challoner in again going over the accounts. When he had satisfied himself, he said, "Our threepence will swell into 100*l.* next year, if we overlook it." (*Ex Rel.* Col. Challoner.)—AUTHOR.

dence, if either a loan or a new tax was in contemplation. Lord Althorp worked out all his calculations, however complicated, alone in his closet; and when he had to receive deputations from the City, he never was at a loss in discussing the details of their propositions. Indeed, it was at these interviews that he appeared to advantage. Feeling thoroughly conversant with his subject, and consequently free from the embarrassment which at other times clouded his expressions, his manner then did justice to his sound and clear understanding. 1801-2. Æt. 19-20.

This degree of knowledge, however, which was but of an elementary character, fell far short of what, in the opinion of Lord Althorp, he might have attained at the University, had his rank not precluded him from taking an ordinary degree. He had toiled through the dry parts of geometry and algebra forming the necessary introduction to Newton's Principia, and to that wonderful implement of thought, the Differential and Integral Calculus, and thus qualified himself for entering the higher departments of science; but these being the subjects reserved for the examination in the Senate House, did not come within the scope of his labours. The natural bent of his mind was rather towards science than politics, the latter being foreign to his bashful and retiring habits, whilst he had a serious and thoughtful disposition, and an innate love of abstract speculation, admirably fitted for scientific pursuits. In after days, when he witnessed the intellectual accomplishments of some of his contem-

1802. Æt. 20.

poraries, who had unsuccessfully competed with him at College, he could not help feeling how much had been denied to him in the restricted course of his academical studies; indeed he never ceased to regard his removal from the University, which virtually ended his education when he was hardly twenty years of age, as a real misfortune. He had made even less progress in classics than in mathematics. His attention to Greek and Latin had gone no further than preparing himself for examination in a Greek play, and a book of Herodotus or Thucydides, with a book of Livy. These in the cant language of the University, he had "crammed" so well as to obtain many marks from the Examiners, but he neither appreciated their beauties, nor acquired any taste for classical literature. Perhaps from some defect of imagination, even Virgil and Horace seemed to have no charms for him, and in all our intercourse I never heard him venture upon a quotation from either. What he still more regretted, was the comparative neglect of the art of English composition at Trinity. It formed no part of the College course; and even in translations from Greek and Latin, to render the sense literally was the only desideratum, all paraphrase, however elegant, being strictly interdicted. As to original composition in English, this was a task never imposed on Lord Althorp, and he left the University with a comparative ignorance of his own language, which, as I have elsewhere stated, he found a serious obstacle in every step of his public career.

# CHAPTER V.

## FOREIGN TRAVEL.—ELECTION CONTESTS.

1802–3. Æt. 20-26.

Love of hunting and racing.

Lord Althorp continued in residence at Trinity during another year, by no means to the advantage, I am constrained to confess, either of his mind or morals. His father, fondly hoping that he would persevere in his studies, as if he were proceeding for his degree, sent him back in Michaelmas Term, but, having no examination in prospect, his motive for exertion was gone: he thought it unnecessary to re-open his books; and from that time, until he quitted the University, his only object was amusement,—this he pursued with the same vigorous resolution that he had before shown in his reading. All other pursuits were laid aside for hunting and racing. He kept a large stud, with an utter disregard of expense, and soon gained the distinction of being one of the very hardest riders at Cambridge. From an occasional visitor, he became a constant attendant at Newmarket; betted heavily, and lost in proportion; although his "Book" was, I have no doubt, a pattern of neatness and correctness, and his calculations made with a degree of care and attention uncommon at his age. On making up his accounts

1802-3. Æt. 20-21.

he discovered, to his extreme mortification, that he had contrived in a few months to incur debts to the amount of several thousand pounds. The taste which he had thus contracted for the Turf was a still greater misfortune, and he seemed to be treading in the steps of his grandfather, when fortunately he was removed from the University on taking his Master's Degree, in June, 1802.

The pain it cost him to break the intelligence of his folly to his father, was increased by the discovery he then made, that Lord Spencer could only raise the large sum required for the payment of his debts, by borrowing. This seems to have cured him of racing. He had too good a heart for a gamester.

The impression made by Lord Althorp on his introduction into London society was far from favourable. In person he was neither tall nor graceful. An embarrassed manner, with a blunt and almost rustic mode of expressing himself, which a voice the reverse of melodious made more remarkable, ill qualified him for the position he was to occupy in the brilliant coteries of Spencer House and Althorp; and his inferiority in personal accomplishments to most young men of his rank was painfully evident, even to his parents. To complete their disappointment, he showed no inclination for the career for which they had destined him. To cite his own words, "he detested the life of a grandee." Still, as his deficiencies were only on the surface, and he had good feelings, good sense, and no inconsiderable stock of knowledge, they persuaded

1802-4. Æt. 20-22.

themselves that his character was yet unformed, and might easily be moulded to their wishes by judicious training. A tour on the Continent, which the Peace of Amiens had just rendered practicable, they eagerly caught at as the most effectual means of his improvement. Accordingly, as soon as he had taken his degree, he was despatched on his travels, furnished with the necessary instructions, and abundant provision for visiting France and Italy to advantage. He was spared the infliction of a tutor, as it happened that a distant relative of Lady Spencer, an Irish Baronet of his own age, of a lively disposition, with some sprinkling of literature, was prevailed upon to accompany him; and, as an additional inducement, they were to go to Naples by sea.

Travels in France and Italy.

The travellers embarked for Italy in the frigate Thisbe, in the summer of 1802. They passed some months between Naples, Rome, and Florence. No particulars of their journey are remembered in the family, and none were likely to possess much interest; for, notwithstanding the pains taken to supply them with the best letters of introduction, they could not be tempted to enter into foreign society, which Lord Althorp, with the true English feeling of an earlier date, regarded so superciliously, that he boasted, on his return, of being still unable to speak French. Even the splendid works of Art in the Galleries of Rome and Florence failed to interest him in sculpture or painting. His companion was unfortunately too unstable in character to exercise any useful influence over him; and it

1804–6. Æt. 22-24.

certainly did not appear that either his mind was enlarged, or his manners improved, by absence from home. One benefit, however, he once told me, he did derive from his tour. When he saw the Catholics oppressing the Protestants abroad, on the very same grounds that the Protestants oppressed the Catholics at home, he felt this oppression to be indefensible, and became as warm a friend of religious liberty as he had previously been an opponent.

The sudden resumption of hostilities caused Lord Althorp's immediate recall, and after a hasty journey through France, he rejoined his family at Spencer House, in the spring of 1803.

Returned for Okehampton.

In April, 1804, he came into Parliament for Okehampton, a nomination borough; which Mr. Strange, a barrister, resigned in his favour. He owed his election to Mr. Pitt, whom Lord Spencer, though not in office, continued to support. Not that Lord Althorp's support could have been of much value, for independently of being a silent member, he was too irregular in his attendance to be counted upon for any important division; moreover, he told me how gratifying a reflection it was to him never to have given a vote against Mr. Fox.

Candidate for the University of Cambridge.

The death of Mr. Pitt, in January, 1806, led to political changes in which Lord Althorp found himself unexpectedly involved. At his father's instigation, he consented, on a very short notice, to become a candidate for the seat for the University of Cambridge, vacated by the death of Mr. Pitt. The contest was in the nature of a triangular duel; his friend, Lord Henry

Petty, a Whig, and his school-fellow, Lord Palmerston, a Tory, then a very young man, being his opponents. As if some presage had been given to them of their future political alliance, their contest was remarkable for the absence of all asperity and personal feeling. There was, of course, no speaking in public, this being wisely interdicted by the custom of the University; and when the rival candidates met, as they often did during their canvass, it only furnished the occasion of some good-humoured pleasantry, or an amicable discussion of their respective prospects of success. Lord Althorp used to say that it was the most agreeable fortnight that he had ever passed at Cambridge. The issue of the contest neither surprised nor mortified him, though his defeat was unequivocally decisive, the numbers at the close of the poll being— 1806. Æt. 24. Is defeated.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Henry Petty ..... | 331 |
| Lord Althorp ..... | 144 |
| Lord Palmerston ..... | 123 |

One circumstance in this election is too curious to be passed over in silence. Lord Henry Petty was at the time Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Althorp a Lord of the Treasury. The Ministerial arrangements had not been completed, until the canvass had proceeded too far for Lord Althorp to retire with justice to his supporters. The Whig party was curiously divided on this occasion; Devonshire House naturally sided with Lord Althorp, whilst Holland House and many of the rising Whigs, such

1806. Æt. 24.

as Mr. Horner and Mr. Brougham, who had been fellow-students with Lord Henry Petty at Edinburgh, were his warm partisans. Lord Henry also had the advantage of his Ministerial position. Lord Ellenborough, in handing over the seals to him, said truly enough, "These are a matter of some hundred votes for you." Their appointments appear in the same patent, which is dated some days later than the issue of the writ. Lord Spencer had previously accepted the seals of the Home Department, and as a common appendage of that high office, his son received the compliment, by no means a gratifying one in his case, of a seat at the Treasury.

Commissioner for the Treasury.

Returned for St. Albans.

Having been obliged to retire from Okehampton when he stood for the University, Lord Althorp had to seek another seat, and found one very expeditiously at St. Albans, a borough which had descended to the family from the celebrated Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. He held it only for a few months, as, at the general election in November, 1806, he became a candidate for Northamptonshire, in conjunction with Sir William Langham, of Cottesbrooke, in the Whig interest, against Mr. Cartwright, a popular Tory country gentleman, and had the satisfaction to be returned at the head of the poll, the numbers being—

Then for Northamptonshire.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Althorp ..... | 2085 |
| Mr. Cartwright ..... ..... | 1990 |
| Sir W. Langham ..... | 1331 |

He kept the seat until his accession to the Earldom, and, in all the violence of party conflict, never

ran the slightest risk of losing it; nor, indeed, would he ever have been opposed, but for the natural desire of his party to obtain the second seat. Since his retirement, the interest he represented, partly owing to the effect of the Reform Bill on county elections, and partly to the absence of his personal influence and popularity, has sunk into complete decay.* 1806–7. Æt. 24-25.

As soon as he had been duly invested with his new dignity, he hastened to Yorkshire to assist his friend Lord Milton, in his celebrated contest with Mr. Lascelles. The part he took in it was so prominent, that in the opinion of Lord Milton he was entitled to share largely in the honour of the victory.

Lord Althorp's tenure of office was only thirteen months, the greater part of which he passed in the country; and when he attended at the Treasury, which was very rarely, and only on particular occasions to make up a Board, he returned home immediately afterwards. Indeed he used to have horses posted on the road from London to Althorp, and often rode down at night as soon as the House had risen, in order that he might hunt with the Pytchley the next morning.† One of the old clerks, when I was

* Since this passage was written, the decided success of Viscount Althorp (the present Earl Spencer), nephew of the subject of this Memoir, at the general election of 1857, revived for a time the hopes of the Whig party in Northamptonshire, who had long been looking out in vain for a leader.—AUTHOR.

† On those nights he had no sleep, and often the hacks which he rode would fall down with him on the road.—LORD LYTTELTON.

I have heard that he caused rough stables to be erected at places where he thought he ought to change hacks, and where there was no

1806-7. Æt. 24-25.

Secretary of the Treasury, liked to dwell facetiously on the flying visits he thus paid to the Department, and the difficulty with which even these were obtained from him.

Break up of the Whig Government.

The Whig Government broke up, in the spring of 1807, and the Tories returned to power, for nearly a quarter of a century; not that they at first gave any promise of such extraordinary vitality, their chief places being filled in a manner that inspired little confidence with the public. The First Lord of the Treasury, the Duke of Portland, at no time much considered for statesmanship or abilities, was nearly incapacitated by an internal disorder, which, ere long, proved fatal; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval, was only known as a clever lawyer, not in first-rate practice; popular, indeed, in the House of Commons, when Solicitor-General, but wholly untried in the higher walks of official business. From the information which has transpired, it is pretty clear that the weakness of the Cabinet would have caused its early downfall, but for the energy and courage of the Chancellor, Lord Eldon, whose invariable maxim was "No resignation."

The Session of 1808 rather increased than diminished the difficulties of the Ministry, who were often reminded of their waning power by narrow majorities; but the position of their adversaries was not proportionably improved: with the King's strenuous opposition, and the prejudices of the

accommodation. He placed his horses at intervals of eight to ten miles along the road.—EARL SPENCER.

higher classes against Liberal opinions, any triumph that the Whigs might obtain in Parliament could only be of a temporary character, and such was the opinion of their chiefs.* Lord Grenville, it is well known, would never have consented to take the Government under these circumstances; and Lord Grey, though younger, and more ambitious and energetic, was too clear-sighted to separate from him. Lord Spencer retired, apparently in disgust, to the elegant pursuits so congenial to his tastes, from which he had been reluctantly diverted; and if Lord Althorp had desired an excuse for preferring country occupations and amusements to politics, he probably found it in the clouded prospects of his party.

1807–8. Æt. 25–26.

Retirement of Lord Spencer from politics.

* *Ex rel.* Lord Holland.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PARLIAMENT.—DUKE OF YORK'S TRIAL.

1809. Æt. 27.

Proceedings against the Duke of York.

THE first instance that I can find of Lord Althorp's showing an interest in politics, was on the occasion of the proceedings against the Duke of York, at the opening of the Session of 1809. It is not my intention to dwell upon that memorable trial any further than may be necessary for illustrating the opinions and career of Lord Althorp; and if in doing so, I seem to go beyond the scope of my narrative, a desire to preserve from oblivion facts not generally known must plead my excuse.

Among the remarkable features of these proceedings, not the least was the view at first taken of the case by the two great parties into which the House was divided. All impeachments or Parliamentary inquiries respecting public men high in office, had usually been undertaken either by the Ministers of the day, or the party seeking to displace them; as may be seen in the impeachments of Strafford and Danby, and the proceedings against Walpole and Marlborough; and, indeed, it could scarcely be otherwise, for, as Lord Brougham has often told me, even in his time, the desire of the House to leave

all public discussions in the hands of the leaders of the two great parties was so predominant, that both sides usually contrived to drown the voice of any speaker who ventured to express opinions not stamped by some such recognised authority. The charges against the Duke of York were brought forward almost in defiance of these conventional arrangements;* not only the Ministers, but even the chiefs of the Liberal party were more or less averse to the inquiry. Mr. Windham and General Fitzpatrick—men of real genius and great Parliamentary talent—supported the Duke, with even indiscreet warmth. Lord Grey, more reserved, though not less decided, always spoke of him as the object of a mean and miserable persecution. Sir Arthur Pigott, the Whig ex-Attorney-General—an eminent authority with his party on points of constitutional law,—and Mr. Leach (afterwards Sir John Leach, Master of the Rolls), already one of the cleverest lawyers of the day, and a very efficient debater, held the same language. The Whig party generally followed in their train, for the Duke had no personal enemies. He was affable and good-humoured, free from all political asperities, as might be seen in his frequent attendance at Brooks's, and the favours he conferred on the connexions of the Opposition, at times much to the annoyance of Ministers. Although of an easy, careless temper, he was, except with respect to money, in the strictest sense a man of his word; and he was proverbially firm and con-

1809. Æt. 27.

* See note at the end of this chapter.

1809. Æt. 27.

stant in his friendships. His accuser enlisted no such sympathies. Colonel Wardle had neither rank, fortune, nor Parliamentary connections. He was indeed almost unknown in the House, being a new member; and the fact which soon transpired, of his having been a violent Orangeman, and concerned in some cruelties during the Irish rebellion, when he served in command of a Welsh Fencible corps, alone created a strong impression against him among the Liberals. Something of vulgar pretension in his manner, an assumption of superior patriotism in his conversation, coupled with a meddling and disputatious spirit, told likewise to his prejudice; and his taking up a case of this magnitude was regarded as a piece of preposterous assurance. The inquiry had scarcely commenced in the Committee before it appeared that he had ventured on a task far beyond his capacity. According to the practice of the House, the examination in chief of the witnesses fell upon him as manager. He perhaps had never examined a witness before, and certainly was very imperfectly acquainted with the rules of evidence. To supply these deficiencies, he had provided himself with a list of questions which he held in his hand, putting them in succession, with little regard at times to the answers he received. The effect was of course almost ludicrous, greatly to his confusion and embarrassment, which the majority of his audience witnessed with evident satisfaction. Such was the spectacle he exhibited, that the Crown lawyers who conducted the defence allowed him to go on with

Part taken by Colonel Wardle and Mr. Whitbread.

1809. Æt. 27.

little interruption, in the belief that he would abandon the case in despair. The House was becoming impatient. The tide of feeling among members seemed to be running decidedly against him. A small section of the Liberal party, who took a similar view of the Duke's conduct, would gladly have come to his assistance, but being chiefly young men, and without any plan of action, they were powerless from want of a leader. At this critical juncture one offered himself in Mr. Whitbread, who—either from a sense of justice, or, as was generally supposed, from a desire to show the Whigs what a mistake they had committed in not taking him into their ministry—interposed, and, without exercising any ostensible control (for Colonel Wardle remained the nominal manager) virtually directed the examination, and so skilfully, that it soon assumed a very different character. The disclosures thus elicited from the witnesses may be seen in the "Parliamentary History." They produced an excitement throughout the country that caused the war, in which we were engaged with every kingdom in Europe, to be apparently forgotten. It far surpassed even the burst of popular feeling subsequently witnessed on the occasion of the Queen's trial. Not the lower orders only, but the middle, almost universally, including the parochial clergy of all denominations, with one voice pronounced the Duke guilty, and called for his punishment.

Excitement throughout the country.

The evidence which thus agitated the public mind, made a deep impression on Lord Althorp. He had listened to it with mixed feelings. He saw the

Lord Althorp's convictions of the justice of the accusations.

1809. Æt. 27.

Duke supported by almost every statesman whose opinion he had been taught to value. He knew Lord Spencer's esteem for him, and the friendly intercourse they had long maintained, as the heads of kindred departments. There was much in his manly character which he justly appreciated. Still, as the inquiry went on, a conviction of the truth of the charges gradually fastened on his judgment; not that he was blind to the difficulties of the case. His attendance at Quarter Sessions had made him sufficiently conversant with the rules of evidence to know that the testimony was not such as would procure a verdict against the Duke in a court of law. On the other hand, he saw a broad distinction between Parliamentary and judicial proceedings; regarding the former in the light of what has been called a domestic tribunal, when the best evidence that can be procured, if it but satisfy the judgment, is conclusive. The sale of military appointments by Mrs. Clarke was established, as he thought, too clearly to be reasonably disputed. A certain connivance on the part of the Duke (although not absolutely proved) seemed an almost irresistible inference, considering the infatuation of his attachment for her, his knowledge of her character and reckless extravagance. Viewing the question as a whole, Lord Althorp felt it impossible to believe him innocent, or to allow such criminality to escape without censure. Many lawyers, and among them Lord Brougham, have treated any departure from the technical rules of evidence as fatal to public justice; but if Lord

Althorp erred (which I do not admit), it was in the company, not only of Wilberforce, but even of Romilly, who, so far from favouring any lax doctrine of probabilities, where a question of fact was in issue, required the strictest proof; and, in opposition to the maxim of Paley, boldly maintained it was better for the general good that nine guilty men should escape, than that one innocent man should suffer. 1809, Æt. 27.

The debates which followed the inquiry again put Lord Althorp's firmness to the test. Not only was a large majority of the House prepared to defend the Duke at all hazards, but some of its most estimable members, who had acted with impartiality in the Committee, now shrank from inflicting indelible disgrace on the favourite son of a monarch they revered, and anxiously sought some mode of averting his condemnation. Colonel Wardle's long and unimpressive harangue, in moving the address for the Duke's removal, marked by little ability, and less tact or feeling, rather strengthened their position. Mr. Perceval's vindication of the Duke—a performance of exquisite skill, which almost gained over Mr. Wilberforce—made an opening for the middle course, taken by Mr. Bankes, exculpating the Duke from the charge of personal corruption, but making the prevalence of abuses, of which he could not have been ignorant, a reason for his retirement from office. If the terms of this motion had been confined to a simple declaration of its object, such a signal condemnation

1809. Æt. 27.

of the abuses in the War Department, with the security obtained against their repetition, would have contented Lord Althorp; but Mr. Bankes, if willing to strike, was yet afraid to wound, and, in his anxiety to spare the feelings of the Court, and to retain the good will of the Ministers, he introduced into his motion expressions so favourable to the Duke, as to give the condemnation the air of an acquittal. When Lord Althorp saw censure thus blended with compliment, and a gross dereliction of duty unbecomingly slurred over, he refused the compromise, and persisted in a stern opposition. Under this conviction, he broke through all ties of friendship and party, and joined the minority, which at first, almost against hope, had ventured to confront an unparalleled combination of Parliamentary strength, talent, and experience.

He joins the minority opposed to the Duke of York.

He was one of the very few members of the great Whig aristocracy who took this course. Mr. Lyttelton (who afterwards became his brother-in-law), Lord John Townshend, Lord William Russell, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Sir Watkin Wynn, and his brother Charles, Lord Ossulston, and Sir John Sebright, Sir Henry Mildmay, Mr. W. Howard, Mr. Coke, and Mr. Curwen, were the others, being a mere sprinkling of this powerful party. Even his friend, Lord Milton, although holding equally Liberal principles, strove to persuade him to vote for Mr. Bankes. Mr. Ponsonby (the Whig leader) spoke for Colonel Wardle's motion, though far less powerfully than Mr. Whitbread, Lord Folkestone,

Sir F. Burdett, or Sir S. Romilly, who on this occasion had become the leaders of the Opposition; none of the Whig ex-Ministers accompanied him into the lobby. 1809. Æt. 27.

Colonel Wardle's motion was defeated by a majority of 243; the struggle was closer on Mr. Bankes's amendment, the numbers being 199 and 294, or a majority of 95 for Ministers; and it should be noticed that, besides the defeat which he had brought upon himself by his vacillation, Mr. Bankes fully shared with Colonel Wardle the displeasure both of the Tory party, and of the Court. Defeat of Colonel Wardle's motion, and of Mr. Bankes's amendment.

The brief triumph thus gained by the Ministers did not extend beyond the walls of the House, for it served only to swell the torrent of indignation out of doors to a fearful height. Even with an unreformed Parliament, a ferment among the people was a serious consideration; and the reflection of a single day sufficed to break up the great Parliamentary force which had rallied round the Ministers. On the day following the division, when the question again came before the House in the form of a resolution, proposed by Mr. Perceval, for the Duke's entire exculpation, many independent and influential country gentlemen announced their defection; and then, and not till then, it appeared that the Whig chiefs had yielded to the importunities of their followers, and were ready to resume their posts at the head of the popular party. All the ingenuity of Mr. Tierney, with the persuasive eloquence of Lord Henry Petty, was exerted to

1809. Æt. 27.

retrieve the mistake that had been committed, but they evidently spoke under constraint, and seemed more desirous to throw blame on the Ministers than on the Duke. This tone did not please: the contest was virtually over. Their tardy accession to the victorious side was coldly received. They were only admitted to serve without distinction in the ranks where they had previously commanded.

Resignation of the Duke of York.

Mr. Perceval's Resolution was virtually defeated, for it passed only in an amended form, and was followed by the Duke's immediate resignation. Even this was not enough for the Opposition. To satisfy their views of public justice, the resignation must be shown to be the result of the proceedings against the Duke, and not be allowed to appear a voluntary act on his part, and accordingly it was determined by Mr. Whitbread, that a Resolution to that effect should be proposed in the House.

Fresh difficulties now presented themselves in the selection of a mover of the proposed Resolution. The incongruous character of the coalition, and the general difference of opinion among its members on political subjects, caused anything like unanimity on this question to be unattainable. The pretensions of Lord Folkestone to this honourable but delicate task were, certainly, the strongest, as besides his services in the Committee, the speech he had made in the debate was of so high an order, that Sir Samuel Romilly declared it to be one of the best he had ever heard in the House of Commons. Unfortunately he had, at times, ex-

pressed himself with a warmth that gave offence to less ardent politicians, so that, on this occasion, they were unwilling to trust him as their representative. 1809. Æt. 27.

So many and various were the objections raised to other members of acknowledged merit, that, as the safest course, Mr. Whitbread was driven to look for some one whose character and position, rather than ability, were likely to secure general acquiescence. The good sense and honest zeal of Lord Althorp, which he had lately had many opportunities of witnessing, pleased him; these, with high connections and freedom from all political asperity, were recommendations likely to unite the greatest number of suffrages; and, accordingly, venturing on the risk of trusting an untried man, he asked Lord Althorp to undertake the office, and obtained his consent. Resolution brought forward by Lord Althorp.

This being Lord Althorp's maiden speech, I have ventured to insert it, without abridgment, from the Parliamentary Debates.* His maiden speech.

Lord Althorp said:

"That there were one or two positions advanced by the right honourable gentleman who had just sat down, in which he could not entirely concur. With regard to the regret of the right honourable gentleman for the resignation of the Duke of York, he admitted that it was a great loss to lose the services of those who had, while in office, efficiently discharged their duty; but the loss of the services of the Duke of York was considerably lessened,

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., v. xiii. p. 718.

1809. Æt. 27.

when they recollected in what manner it had been proved at their bar that the Royal Duke discharged his duty. He differed also from that right honourable gentleman, as to the great use and importance he thought proper to attach to the elevated rank of that illustrious person. He (Lord Althorp) was rather disposed to think, that such high rank and affinity to the throne, were not the most recommendatory qualifications for the most responsible situations under the Crown—(Hear! Hear!); and he appealed to those who heard him, if, in the course of the late proceedings, their debates were not, in some degree, influenced by considerations of delicacy, inseparable from any discussion involving the character and honour of one so near His Majesty; and, therefore, it did appear to him to be of the greatest importance that no person should, for the future, be called to such high situations, but such as could be completely responsible. (Hear! Hear!) Another assertion of the right honourable gentleman went to the total acquittal of the Duke of York, as to corruption or connivance. It was not necessary now, perhaps, to go into this, but as it was mentioned, he would state, that he did think the Duke of York had been proved guilty of connivance at the corrupt practices which had taken place; and if His Royal Highness had continued in office, he thought that the House must have gone farther, and passed a sentence upon him that would have rendered his resignation unavoidable. With regard to their subsequent proceedings, he was of opinion that the question stood in a state in which the House of Commons ought not to suffer it to remain. He wished to place it on the journals, that the Duke of York had resigned. This notification would give consistency to the entire character of the proceeding, and bring it to its proper close, at the same time satisfactorily explaining why it was closed. Not, however, that he would be understood to say that he considered removal from office a constitutional punishment; but it would be, in this case, so far effective as to preclude the

possibility of that Royal Duke being ever re-appointed to a situation he had proved himself so incompetent to fill. No man could, or ought to hold that important situation, who was not in full possession of the confidence of the country. The Duke of York had forfeited that confidence. He had lost the confidence of the country for ever, and, by consequence, he must abandon all hopes of ever again returning to that situation. This was a severe lesson, but it was as salutary, as it was severe; it would prove to all who might succeed that Royal Duke, that it was not within the power of any sovereign, however beloved or confided in, to protect his most favoured servant from the just consequences of the maladministration of his public duty." The noble lord then concluded by moving, "That His Royal Highness the Duke of York having resigned the command of the army, this House does not now think it necessary to proceed any farther in the consideration of the evidence before the Committee, appointed to inquire into the conduct of His Royal Highness, as far as that evidence related to His Royal Highness the Duke York." 1809. Æt. 27.

From a new member, desiring to pursue politics as a profession, this speech might have passed without notice; but as the first essay of a young nobleman, who evidently had not made eloquence his study, it was favourably received. Mr. Whitbread went so far as to describe it, "as being as free from all affectation, as it was full of ability." Less partial critics admitted the matter and manner to be quite in keeping; and they saw, in the bold and evidently honest view of the case taken by Lord Althorp, exhibited in his judicious reasoning, and his homely but perspicuous diction, the promise of a valuable public man. Even in the feverish

1809. Æt. 27.

excitement of Parliamentary feeling which prevailed that night, the strong language he used did not call forth an expression of disparagement or rebuke. The debate turned upon the word "now" in Lord Althorp's Resolution, which was construed to aim at excluding the Duke permanently from the public service, and on that ground Mr. Perceval carried an amendment for its omission.

Resolution carried.

With this single exception, the Resolution was allowed to pass unaltered, and Lord Althorp was thus honourably associated with the triumphant close of this memorable contest.

Remarks on the Duke of York.

Attempts have been made to represent the Duke as an injured man, and the victim of popular clamour, though few of his advocates have ventured to assert his entire innocence. A distinguished officer, who lived on terms of intimacy with him, admitted in my presence, shortly after the trial, that the case was but too clear; and indeed the judgment passed on it by public opinion has never been reversed. The Duke's infatuation for his mistresses was almost as blind as that of Charles II.; and Mrs. Clarke was generally believed, when she asserted that she could have brought forward many more instances, had she not shrunk from betraying those who treated her liberally. His errors, however, sprang rather from a bad education and the temptations incidental to his position, than from inherent depravity. He felt the stings of conscience, and armed himself against them by the most strenuous support of the

Church establishment, and opposition to Catholic emancipation. In the midst of his irregularities, he used to say, and without ostentation, from which he was entirely free, that he never travelled without taking a Bible in his carriage. He was the least clever of all the King's sons. In no part of his Dutch campaigns did he display any talent for war or affairs; and, as Lord Althorp justly observed, the merit of his administration at the Horse Guards was taken upon trust. The re-organisation of the British army must not be ascribed to him. It was the result of the experience drawn from the Spanish war by the genius of Wellington, aided by the scientific instruction imparted at the Military College. No improvement of any importance is known to have originated with the Duke. Praise, however, is certainly due to him for the disinterested distribution of his patronage, during the last years of the war, among the officers recommended by Lord Wellington or the authorities of the College, as well as for the interest he evinced—to a degree unknown in his predecessors—in the condition of the common soldier. These were redeeming points in his character, but not such as to reflect censure on those who brought his errors under the consideration of the public.

1809. Æt. 27.

The following letters were addressed by Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer, during the proceedings against the Duke:—

1809.
Æt. 27.

Letters from Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer during the proceedings.

"DEAR FATHER,

"As I told you yesterday morning that there was no probability of finishing last night, I did not think you would be very anxious to hear what happened, and I, therefore, went to bed instead of writing to you. Bankes's speech was a very good one; but I was quite surprised by Folkestone. I had no idea that he could have made so able and so impressive a speech: it appeared to make a very great impression upon everybody. With regard to the state of the question, I think it is very probable that Bankes's amendment will in the end be carried,—at any rate, it will be a very near run. For myself, I do not think that it is necessary for a member of the House of Commons, in order to give a vote of censure, to be convinced *by exact legal* evidence, provided he is positively convinced that the ground of censure exists. Now, this is my case. I do not think that there is the proper kind of evidence to convict the Duke of York in a Court of Law, but in my own mind I am convinced that he did know that Mrs. Clarke received presents, in order to use her influence with him, and I shall therefore vote for Wardle's original motion. There are, from what I hear, about fifty or sixty who take the same line; this will make some difficulty in bringing all our forces to bear at once upon the enemy. When Wardle's motion is lost, we shall have only one objection to voting for Bankes's, which is, that in it he says there is no ground whatever for charging the Duke of York with personal corruption or participation. We cannot, of course, agree to this, in the usual sense of the words; but Bankes says, he only means by 'charging' to say impeaching, using it only in the strict legal sense, and in that sense I certainly agree with him, for the last thing I wish for is an impeachment. He has, however, so managed the first question on which we shall divide, that all who wish for the Duke of York's dismissal will vote together, and if we

are beaten upon that, the difficulty will be done away, for Bankes's address will never be put. The debate will probably last one or two days longer. A Mr. Henry Smith is to move for impeachment, I hear, and Sir Thomas Turton is to move the leaving out of the word 'No' in Perceval's Resolution, which says, there is no proof of corruption, &c., against the Duke of York.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"St. James's Place, *March 11th*, 1809."

"Dear Father,

"When I wrote to you last, I did not tell you all the objections which there are to Bankes's address, for the fact is, that only hearing it read, the sentence which contradicted Wardle's made so much impression upon me, that the other very objectionable parts did not strike me; but last night Milton came to Folkestone and me, to ask us whether we would vote for it, provided the word 'charging,' was altered into 'instituting any further proceeding.' We immediately agreed to it, till, on reading it over with him, we found many other very material objections to it: the whole style is complimentary; and, indeed, what it says with respect to his regulations is not founded on any evidence we have before us, and therefore cannot be proper to be stated. In short, for myself, I think there is only one sentence in it of which I can approve, and that is the one which says that the corruptions could not have existed without the suspicions of the Duke of York. It will be impossible therefore for me to vote for it. I wrote this yesterday: since which I have come into a very new situation, which will prevent my saying more than a very few words to you. If Bankes's address is to be put from the chair, I am to move an amendment to it, leaving out the objectionable parts. If the minority support Wardle against him, in order to throw

1809. Æt. 27.

out both, I am to move a new address. The only case in which I shall not have to speak, will be in case Perceval beats us on the first division.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"St. James's Place, *March 15th*, 1809."

"Dear Father,

"Though I escaped a speech on Wednesday I am not clear yet, for I shall move an address for the removal of the Duke of York, immediately after Bathurst's motion is disposed of. We last night had two divisions, so similar to the two others, that I did not think it at all necessary to write to you by the coach. On Turton's motion of leaving out the word 'no,' in the Resolution of acquittal, we divided 135 for it, and 334 against it. On the Resolution itself, we divided 278 for it, and 196 against it. Sir Thomas Turton's amendment was, in its effects, of inestimable value, for it prevented any other amendment, and forced every one to give a direct vote upon the original question. Bankes was in such a passion at it, that he could hardly utter, and Petty, and Windham, and Tierney made bitter lamentations. Cartwright has so far voted on the side of Ministers, but last night declared his intention of voting against them on Bathurst's Resolution, and from what he said, I think he will probably vote for my address. Lord Euston, and the Cavendishes, and Fitzpatrick, go through with the Duke of York. Morpeth has so far voted for him, but intends to support Bathurst; but William Howard has been in the minority on every division. Sir John Sebright has all along voted in the minority, and Goddard and Shaw Lefevre. Ossulston and the two Wynns voted against Turton's amendment, though they had voted for Wardle's address, which, I confess, I do not understand. Sir Henry Mildmay is very eager against the Duke,—indeed, from what I hear, he is a capital politician. Fuller made a gentleman-like speech yesterday, as you will see in the papers. With

regard to the line which I have taken myself, I hope you approve of it. I at first felt doubtful, when I found I was disagreeing with Elliot, for, as to the rest, I do not care a farthing about their opinions; but I am more and more satisfied with myself every day, as I have continued to see the extreme difficulties in which our leaders placed themselves, and the very absurd distinctions which they were obliged to make, in order to vote with consistency. By-the-by, I forgot to tell you that Folkestone desired me to ask you what your opinion would be on a Bill, which he thinks of bringing in, to prevent Princes of the Blood from holding responsible situations. I confess that I can see no objection to its passing, but many great advantages which will result from it.

1809. Æt. 27.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"St. James's Place, *March* 18*th*, 1809."

"I shall be very glad to see you at Althorp to talk these things over with you; my political situation is very much changed within this last fortnight; my opinions, as you know, have long been the same, but till now I have never had the nerve to act upon them."

"DEAR FATHER,

"The Duke of York has resigned, and our course of proceeding is therefore changed. We shall oppose Bathurst's resolution, as being too complimentary and too weak in its censure for the House to conclude its proceedings with, and I shall move—after it is disposed of—that, in consequence of the resignation of the Duke of York, the House does not think it necessary to proceed any further in the investigation, which will show the point which we have aimed at, and that, if the investigation had not taken place, some further proceeding would have been necessary.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"St. James's Place, *March* 20*th*, 1809."

1809. Æt. 27.

Reasons for his joining the Whig party.

Since Lord Althorp will be most known to posterity as a politician, I am glad to be able to give, on his own authority, some account of the growth of his opinions on public affairs at this early period of his life. He had been brought up a decided Tory, with all the prejudices contracted by that party during the excesses of the French Revolution, Whiggism being for years held in utter abomination at Spencer House, as the symbol of the most dangerous errors in morals and politics. When he went to Cambridge, Lady Spencer's parting and earnest admonition was, to "beware of all Whigs." He accordingly, at first, viewed with distrust such of his fellow students as belonged to Whig families. He was puzzled, however, on finding their society much more to his taste, than that of the young Tories whom he had been recommended to cultivate. Almost in spite of himself he formed an intimate friendship with Lord Henry Petty (since Marquis of Lansdowne), and Lord Ebrington (since Earl Fortescue); and to them must, I believe, be ascribed his altered feelings towards the Liberal party; for, when he left the University, nearly all his friendships lay among the Whigs, and without being himself aware of it, he had adopted many of their opinions. His continental tour, brief as it was, served to strengthen that impression. It was no slight satisfaction to him to find Lord Spencer, on his return, reconciled to the heads of the Whig party, owing to their common enmity to the

Addington administration. He now occasionally met Mr. Fox at Spencer House, and to see that great statesman in the mild intercourse of private life, was to admire and love him. If Lord Althorp did not immediately declare himself one of his followers, it was out of deference to Lord Spencer, who never separated himself from Mr. Pitt. He certainly never gave a good Tory vote afterwards. He drifted down the current which bore his father and the friends of Mr. Fox, after their very brief possession of office, into their very long opposition; but his short Parliamentary experience rather alienated him from the Tories, than attached him to the Whigs. To a young man, indeed, with faint party predilections, the latter could not then appear otherwise than to disadvantage; as from their fear of giving irreconcilable offence to the King, and of losing the support of the Grenvillites, they were driven to a policy which had in it more of compromise than progress. This frequent sacrifice of principle to expediency did not suit Lord Althorp. He regarded it as short-sighted and pusillanimous. The bolder course pursued by Sir Samuel Romilly and Mr. Whitbread, and the small section of the Liberals usually termed Democratic Whigs, or Patriots, in their unsparing denunciations of abuses at home and abroad, and their eloquent vindication of popular rights, he long approved, before he ventured to praise. Here alone he recognised the sentiments of Mr. Fox; and finding, as he thought, in Mr. Whitbread,

1809. Æt. 27.

1809. Æt. 27. during the proceedings against the Duke, many of the qualities which he admired in Mr. Fox and could see in no other living statesman, he determined to adopt him henceforth as his leader.*

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* It subsequently transpired that the Ministers had acquiesced in the inquiry, under very erroneous impressions of the nature of the charges, which could be brought against the Duke. Either from his habitual carelessness, or from some perversion of judgment, the statement he laid before Mr. Perceval, in answer to Colonel Wardle, proved very inaccurate. Some of the disclosures took Mr. Perceval completely by surprise, and made him very angry. He complained bitterly in private of the Duke's folly, and, indeed, Lord Brougham tells me, obliged him to resign, a step which he was far too obstinate to have taken, except by compulsion.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER VII.

### NEW POLITICAL CONNECTIONS.—WHITBREAD.—FOLKESTONE.—HAMILTON.—BURDETT.

1809. Æt. 27.

Lord Althorp forms Liberal connections.

Lord Spencer had now to decide whether Lord Althorp should declare himself "a Whig and something more," or retire from Parliament. Either alternative must have been a severe disappointment to a veteran statesman who had fondly hoped to see his son supporting his principles, and succeeding to his position in public life. He was too confident, however, of Lord Althorp's rectitude of principle and soundness of judgment to fear his falling into any serious errors of conduct, and accordingly he yielded to his wishes. Father and son continued to live on the same terms of mutual affection, gradually approximating in their views, until at last they cordially concurred on the great question of Parliamentary Reform, and the various changes to which that measure gave rise. They kept up a constant correspondence on the politics of the day; and Lord Althorp on some important occasions derived essential benefit from his father's counsel.

The knot of Liberals to whom Lord Althorp

1809. Æt. 27.

had attached himself, were chiefly young men—such as Lord Archibald Hamilton, Viscount Folkestone, and Sir Francis Burdett—these being, next to Mr. Whitbread and Sir Samuel Romilly (when the latter chose to come among them), the most influential of their members. Their eagerness and impatience of control often gave umbrage to the Whig leaders, and, indeed, almost unfitted them for party obligations. The strongest bond of union amongst them was a decided bias towards the popular, rather than the aristocratical element of the Constitution. A redistribution of political power was, in their eyes, essential for the protection of the people against the arbitrary policy of the Government; and, accordingly, they promoted Parliamentary Reform, though not on an extensive scale, or on a very intelligible basis. They could not agree on the vital question of the franchise, being at a loss how to solve the difficult problem, how to leave the social condition of the members of Parliament unaltered, and yet place them more under the control of the middle classes, which they esteemed the only effectual check on the corruption and mismanagement prevailing throughout the public service. Their hot zeal for administrative reform would have gone far to break up the system of patronage which was supposed to give vitality to the Government. What they laid most stress upon, was the urgent necessity of redressing the grievances of the working classes, which, they asserted, too truly, to have been

culpably neglected by Parliament; and here they opened a field for legislation destined in after years to yield most abundant harvests. But these views, however legitimate in the abstract, involved a course of action for which the nation was not prepared. In the midst of an unsuccessful war, with discontent raging in the manufacturing districts, a strong feeling prevailed among moderate men, even in the middle classes, that any material changes in the machinery of Government might impair its efficiency, and, by unsettling the public mind, hazard the safety of the country. As the fear of invasion subsided, that of a popular insurrection increased; and the only security against it was supposed to lie in maintaining almost a hostile attitude towards the masses, and strengthening the hands of the Government. Indeed, the reactionary feeling which sprang out of the French Revolution was still so active, that the Tories found it easy to revive the old cry against levellers and democrats, which soon succeeded in making the public regard the persons thus designated, including most of the ultra-Liberals, in the same light with the leaders of the revolutionary movement in France: it being entirely overlooked that no political section in the House contained a larger proportion of men so independent in fortune and position, or held in higher estimation for their intelligence and private worth.

1809. Æt. 27.

Mr. Whitbread, the life and soul of the party, is described by Lord Brougham (who was his

Mr. Whitbread.

1809. Æt. 27. intimate friend) as a finished specimen of an English statesman, not of the patrician order. He had been brought up among the Nonconformists, and the force of early impressions might be perceived, not less in his plain and downright manners, than in the hardy complexion of his politics. To find himself shut out of the Liberal Cabinet in 1806, and supplanted by Mr. Ponsonby in the leadership of the Opposition in 1807, were the penalties he paid for his boisterous protests against the dictation of great Whig Lords, and his sneers at the traditional maxims which the party still held in veneration. This language, often too justly provoked, was, however, but "the flash and outbreak of a fiery mind," for his principles were stronger than his prejudices; and although he did not call himself a Whig, he gave a loyal support to Mr. Fox; and on some memorable occasions, especially in the proceedings both against Lord Melville and the Duke of York, he turned for a while the tide of feeling throughout the country, almost in spite of themselves, completely in favour of the Whigs. This feeling in Lord Melville's case was so strong as to draw from Mr. Pitt the admission, that the Ministry might bear the defeats of Austerlitz and Ulm, but not the re-appointment of that nobleman. Mr. Whitbread alone, of the chiefs of the Opposition, had an eminent capacity for business—his strong, clear, sense being as remarkable as his industry. It was not uncommon to see him, without any apparent effort, dictating to his two secre-

taries, whilst he carried on an animated conversation. Lord Grey, his brother-in-law, used to say that he worked harder than any of his own dray-horses. The earnestness that carried him through these incessant labours, constituted the charm of his character. It supplied the place of genius, and gave to his speeches—which bore the unmistakable stamp of sincerity, both in argument and force of expression—a power often envied by his more brilliant rivals. He is, indeed, called by Lord Byron a vulgar Demosthenes. That men of high connections were those who most suffered from the violence of his invectives was the fault of an unsound political system, for which its supporters, and not its opponents, were answerable. His efforts to amend that system were all of a legitimate character; and he showed far more eagerness in assailing administrative abuses than in pressing organic reforms. Nor was this seen on political questions alone. What he effected for jails and lunatic asylums, at a time that the public attention could with difficulty be drawn to them, is even more honourable to him than his vindication of popular rights; and the noble use he made of his wealth in the pursuit of these objects kept pace with his professions. He could not be brought to believe that any danger was to be apprehended from the working classes. No public man of his day did more for the improvement of their condition than himself, or more disinterestedly; but he neither flattered their prejudices, nor courted their

1809. Æt. 57.

1809. Æt. 27.

support; he even seemed indifferent to their opinion of his conduct, and in the very district where his personal influence was of most importance to him, the strictness of his discipline, in the command of the Bedfordshire Militia, nearly caused a mutiny. Had the fears of the alarmists been realised, he was one of those men in whose courage and patriotism they would have found the surest protection.

Viscount Folkestone (Earl of Radnor).

Viscount Folkestone (at the time I write the venerable Earl of Radnor), was then scarcely thirty years old. Already rich by his marriage with the only daughter and heiress of Lord Lincoln, handsome and high spirited, with refined tastes and a cultivated mind, his connexions and accomplishments alone gave him a considerable position in the House. He had not yet attached himself to either party. He was, however, the intimate friend, and had even been considered the pupil, of Mr. Windham, whom he warmly supported in the Parliamentary conflicts during the Addington Administration, when a sense of duty engaged him in strong opposition to the Court, although his father was a decided Tory of the old school,* and his mother a personal friend, and at

* Lord Radnor entertained some fantastic notions on what he termed the constitutional privileges of the peerage,—little in unison with the spirit of the age,—and these, combined with his other prejudices, probably tended to alienate Lord Folkestone, who was a much abler man, from Tory opinions. Lord Radnor carried these feelings so far as absolutely to refuse the payment of a tax which he regarded as unjust, and suffered a distress for many years to be levied on his goods for the amount.—(*Ex rel.* Lord Brougham.)—AUTHOR.

one time in the household, of Queen Charlotte. His speech on the Duke of York's case displayed powers, which in the estimation not only of Mr. Windham, but of Sir Samuel Romilly and Mr. Canning, entitled him to a brilliant political career. He was of a thoughtful, critical turn of mind, distrusting the commonly received maxims of Government, and always disposed to side with the minority. Oppression in any form or place he could not endure; and Mr. Burke's indignation against Hastings seemed revived in his attacks on Lord Wellesley's Indian Administration. With the same chivalrous warmth he espoused the interests of the lower classes at home. His views were often more speculative than practical; and he made no allowance for the difficulties of the Government, or the feelings of its supporters; but the same honest, conscientious, and fearless spirit always distinguished him; and, far from seeking popular favour, he opposed the peace of 1803, at the height of its popularity, and advocated the new Poor Law of 1834, at the height of its unpopularity, with all the ardour and energy that he could have shown if the country had been entirely with him. Such a man might be troublesome to a Minister—he could hardly be dangerous to the State.

1809. Æt. 27.

Lord Archibald Hamilton.

Lord Archibald Hamilton must have seemed misplaced among members unfavourable to the aristocracy. He had the manly beauty and noble demeanour that immortalise the portraits of Velas-

1809. Æt. 27.

quez and Vandyke. The first Lord Dunfermline* wrote to me of him: "He was too punctilious for my taste; but I venerated him as a man of the soundest and steadiest public principles, and a thoroughly high-minded gentleman. In both these relations he was scrupulously correct, and commanded as much general respect as any statesman of his day." Reserve, if not pride, and the infirmity of increasing deafness, made him too exclusive to be popular. He saw Scotland become a mere borough of Lord Melville's with feelings of indignation, which, sharpened perhaps by the diminished influence of his own family, partly explain his zeal for Parliamentary Reform. If not successful at the time, retributive justice has been done to his memory, in the fact that not a single Tory, at the time I write these words, is returned for a Scottish burgh.

Sir Francis Burdett.

Sir Francis Burdett, when a very young man on his travels, had witnessed and shared the enthusiasm excited in France by the first outbreak of the Revolution, and it was his pride and glory to be at the head of what was called the democratical party in England. For more than a quarter of a century he pursued a course of incessant agitation, often in concert with obscure and worthless adventurers, that made him the terror of a large portion of the community, and the

* The Right Honourable James Abercromby, a younger son of the illustrious Sir Ralph; one of the most honest statesmen I ever knew. —AUTHOR.

scourge of successive Administrations. Nothing short of electoral districts, and a franchise co-extensive with taxation, as adopted in France, could satisfy his views of Parliamentary Reform—and yet he was no democrat. He thoroughly appreciated his position in society and his great landed estate; nor did he forget that one of his ancestors had been of sufficient importance to be executed for treason by Edward IV. He reverenced the monarchy: he was assiduous in his attendance at Court: he discountenanced all attacks on the influence of the Crown, maintaining that the monarch was the natural protector of the lower classes against the higher. Thus he seemed to oscillate between Democracy and Toryism, and in his old age subsided into the latter. Not that he wanted either courage or decision; but he was vain, and delighted in paradox, as he showed both in his conversation and conduct. He was also the reverse of prescient, so that success, when unexpected, proved more embarrassing to him than failure. His younger brother, who perished at the Falls of Lauffen, had been reputed mad, and there were suspicions of an hereditary taint. Sir Francis, indeed, maintained to me that all men were more or less disordered in mind. His education had been neglected, and he had no depth of knowledge. He boasted of his ignorance of all authors but Shakspeare and Horace: these, however, he knew so well that his quotations from them were often the most effective parts of his speeches. Mr.

1809. Æt. 27.

1809. Æt. 27. Canning, a finished scholar, said it was inspiration. Vivacity of thought, not strength of intellect, obtained him reputation as a speaker, and hence his high favour with the masses, on whom his ready flow of words, set off by a fine clear voice and very graceful person, told like enchantment. He looked what he was, a thoroughly high-bred gentleman; and political antipathies rarely betrayed him into personal resentments. When it is recollected that he was an agreeable companion, and a man of unblemished honour, it is easy to understand, how, in spite of many weaknesses, and some vices, he found a ready acceptance among men of sounder views, and more strict morality.

Such were Lord Althorp's political associates, during the many years that he subsequently took part in public affairs, and he never regretted his connection with them. That they were men of generous impulses and determined minds, will hardly be disputed: the French Revolution presented to them strong arguments in favour of timely reforms; and they insisted that the excesses which disgraced it could only have been committed in a country where the lower classes had long been systematically oppressed by the higher:—this was the head and front of their offence. To suppose that such men as I have described could desire to impair the just ascendency of the higher classes over the lower, would be perfectly preposterous.

"Appellations of opprobrious origin," says Southey (in his Life of Wesley), "have often been adopted

1809. Æt. 27.

by the parties to which they were applied, as well as by the public: convenience legitimates the inventions of malice." Thus the party to which Lord Althorp had attached himself obtained, and is still known by, the appellation of Radicals; nor did he complain of being so distinguished. But the Radical members of 1809 must not be confounded with those of our own time. Moderate concessions from the Whigs would have satisfied the former. If not partisans they were, at least, faithful allies. They belonged to the same class, were governed by the same social influences, and with their common political principles, it was plain that, if true to themselves, they could have no separate interests. Far from entering into compacts with the Tories, they opposed them with a warmth condemned by the Whigs, and regarded their maintenance in power as a heavy national misfortune.*

Radical party.

* The dispute between the two sections of the Liberal party would be an interesting subject for inquiry. The Whig Leaders, though they discountenanced, were some of them far from really disapproving the views of Ultra-Liberals. They were restrained only by the fear of the entire ruin of the party, already disorganised by repeated failures, and little able to withstand any more shocks against the fears or prejudices of the public.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.—BOXING.—FIELD SPORTS.

1809. Æt. 27.

Motion for committee of inquiry brought forward by Lord Folkestone.

Lord Althorp had barely time to take his seat below the gangway, before the differences between his old and his new friends were brought abruptly to a head, in a manner that exhibited the latter by no means to advantage. Elated by their recent success, they proposed to follow it up by a grand stroke in the same direction, calculated to maintain their influence over the public mind. This was no less than the establishment of a committee of inquiry into "the existence of any corrupt practices in the disposal of offices in any department of the State." Such an inquiry must, in the excited state of public feeling, have necessarily become an inquisition, and would have brought forward a host of public informers, so that no official servant could have been safe; whilst the universal distrust and suspicion inseparable from such proceedings were wholly opposed to the spirit of our national institutions. The motion was intrusted to Lord Folkestone, who argued it feebly, and without attempting to face its obvious objections. The Whigs were not let into the secret; and, indeed, only learned

the object of the motion at the meeting of the House. However, they had their revenge. Without any signs of compunction, they showed, with great force, how an inquiry so vague in its nature and complexion, and so sweeping in extent, might become an engine of the greatest oppression towards individuals, and was at variance with all the principles of wise legislation. 1809. Æt. 27.

These sentiments were shared by a very large majority of the House. Except speeches from Mr. Perceval and Mr. Canning, no part was taken in the debate by the Ministerialists, who left the contest entirely to the Liberals; and it must be admitted that Mr. Tierney, Lord Henry Petty, and Mr. Ponsonby, proved more than a match for Lord Folkestone, Mr. Whitbread, and Lord Archibald Hamilton. The numbers in the division were sufficiently decisive.

Motion rejected by a large majority.

| | |
|---|---|
| For the Motion . . . . . | 30 |
| Against . . . . . | 178 |
| Majority . . . . . | 148 |

A short account is given of the debate by Lord Althorp in the following letter to Lord Spencer:—

"Dear Father,

"They objected to Folkestone's motion last night, because it was too general: it certainly would have led to a very extended inquiry: but I do not see how the object of finding out abuses, or satisfying people that there were none, in the disposal of patronage, could be

1809. Æt. 27.

effected without giving very general powers to the committee. I accordingly voted for the motion; and, as you will see by the papers, was in a very small minority. Lord Forbes, Sir John St. Aubyn, Lyttelton, Lamb, Pelham, Dudley North, Western, Ord, and I think Scudamore, and Coke, voted in the minority, besides those who spoke.

"Milton is not in town. I think Ossulston voted in the minority. You will see that Ord has given a notice about the Dutch commissioners. Martin is to make some motion on the Third Report of the Finance Committee, which relates to pensions and sinecures; but I do not know what it is. I have endeavoured to make out a list of the minority last night. I have made out thirty-one names, and there was one whose face I did not know, in the lobby.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"*April 19th*, 1809."

From this night must be dated the independent action of Mr. Whitbread and his followers, as a distinct political party. They chose to view the course pursued by the Whig leaders as practically repudiating the principles of Reform, and made it a plea for an open rupture with them. This, perhaps, could not have been long delayed, for the more liberal or democratical section of the Whigs had obtained such an accession of strength in the country from the Duke of York's trial, and had so eminently distinguished themselves in debate, that they naturally bore with impatience the ascendency of the Whig leaders, and, being men of sanguine dispositions, indulged a too confident hope that they could still command the support of a

large portion of the majority which had voted against the Duke. One object, indeed, of Lord Folkestone's motion was, to test the relative strength of the Liberal sections. The result showed how completely the aristocratical element predominated; but the collision broke up the party,—so that the great Parliamentary victory, which promised such brilliant fruits to the Whigs, only served to inflict on them the severest blow they had received since the schism of Fox and Burke, in 1793.

1809. Æt. 27.

The Whig party splits into two sections.

For the nation this was not an unhappy event. It averted the downfall of a weak Government, but the only one that, at the time, was likely to obtain the support of the monarch and the people. The policy of the Liberals had virtually disqualified them for the vigorous prosecution of the war; and their Parliamentary success would have been alike fatal to themselves, and to the national interests.

Notwithstanding their isolated position and diminished numbers, Mr. Whitbread and his followers still formed a powerful party. Owing to the silence and inaction of the Whigs, they became indeed, for a time, the only organs of Liberal principles in the House. Whatever question of importance was agitated on the Opposition benches originated with them, and their leaders took the most prominent part in all important debates. Even some of their subalterns obtained a short-lived notoriety by speeches of far greater pretensions

1809-10. Æt. 27-28.

than merit. This charge could not be brought against Lord Althorp, whom neither all the encouragement he had received for the creditable manner in which he had already acquitted himself, nor his unquestionable zeal in the cause, could induce to open his lips again during the Session. Perhaps he listened to the counsels of Mr. Whitbread, who used to say that the success of a first speech furnished the very best reason for caution in making a second, which was attended with at least equal risk of failure. It certainly had not, at this time, occurred to him that he could ever make a figure in the House; and one great incentive to Parliamentary oratory was, in him, entirely wanting,—he had no ambition. It was only on the spur of duty, and at the urgent instance of Mr. Whitbread, that his speech had been made; and having satisfied his conscience by the effort, he did not feel himself called upon to repeat it. His name scarcely appears in the debates of the following Session (1810); but by that time the state of parties had materially changed.

Indignation at the wretched expedition to Walcheren had caused a truce between the different sections of the Liberals, and their union supplied an abundance of superior speakers. This silenced the inferior ones. Lord Althorp sat usually by Mr. Whitbread, and voted steadily with him, except on one occasion, when they appear to have taken different views of the case of Gale Jones, a bankrupt apothecary, whom a talent for decla-

mation had raised to a short-lived importance among the lower class of Westminster politicians. A resolution had been passed by an obscure club of small tradesmen and workmen, called the London Forum, of which this man was president, condemnatory of the House for excluding strangers during the Walcheren inquiry. It would certainly have been wiser in the Ministers to have overlooked the insult, coming as it did from a quarter so insignificant; but heated counsels prevailed, and he was, by an unanimous vote, committed to Newgate for breach of privilege, no question having been raised as to the right of Parliament to inflict such punishment. Sir Francis Burdett's absence prevented his joining in the vote; and, in conjunction with Mr. Whitbread, he took an early opportunity of moving the discharge of the prisoner on the ground that such an imprisonment was contrary to the law of the land.

1810. Æt. 28.

On a division there were only 14 votes for the motion, to 153 against it; and as Lord Althorp's name is not in the minority, I infer that he either voted in the majority, of which no list has been preserved, or did not vote at all. When Sir Francis Burdett, regarding the case of Gale Jones in the light of an "*experimentum in corpore vili*," which had not received due attention, provoked a similar exercise of the privilege of the House against himself, he met with no support from Lord Althorp; so that the latter seems to have already formed the opinion, of which he afterwards showed

1812. Æt. 30.

himself so tenacious, that Parliamentary privilege was part of the law of the land, and equally essential to the maintenance of constitutional liberty.

Reaction in the country in favour of the Government.

The riots that grew out of this unfortunate contest aided the reaction towards Toryism, which had already begun throughout the country; and, contrary to general expectation, so far from being arrested, it received an additional impulse from the accession of the Prince of Wales to the Regency. His preference of Whig principles—if it ever really existed—had ceased with the decline of his connections with the Whig leaders, and he only kept on the mask until he could with decency trust himself in the hands of their opponents. Whilst both parties were eagerly expecting his decision, he adroitly availed himself of the temporary calm in the political horizon to obtain one of the few objects he had really at heart. Independently of his regard for the Duke of York, which was beyond what might have been expected from a man of his selfish nature, he believed it essential to the security of the Crown, that the Commander-in-Chief should be a Prince of the Blood; a political maxim to which both George II. and George III. attached the greatest importance. Accordingly, he lent a willing ear to the assurances of his courtiers that the popular resentment against the Duke had not only subsided, but was even transferred to Colonel Wardle, whose mean and paltry proceedings had certainly excited general disgust; and

finding the Ministers ready to take upon themselves the full responsibility of the measure, and the Whigs not unfavourable to it, he consented, in May, 1812, to the Duke's reinstatement at the Horse Guards. Sir David Dundas, who was wholly devoted to the Royal Family, and had accepted the office upon the understanding that he was only to hold it temporarily, gladly retired, more than adequately rewarded for his services by the grant of a handsome pension to his wife.*

1812. Æt. 30.

The Duke of York reinstated at the Horse Guards.

It is an instance of the placability of the English people, that the favour then shown to the Duke was, on the whole, not unfavourably received by the great body of the nation; and considering the state of political parties in the House, it might have been more wise in the Opposition to content themselves with a simple protest against it. This, however, was spurned by Mr. Whitbread and his followers as a positive dereliction of duty; and in

* Sir David Dundas had been from age and infirmity wholly unequal to the duties of so laborious an office. He felt this himself, and when my father attended his first levee, frankly observed that he was sorry to be at the Horse Guards, and trusted to be soon able to leave it. My father had been on his staff during the campaigns of 1794 and 1795, and used to describe him as an intelligent officer, but of cold and austere manners, and too fond of money to be much liked. He had amassed a considerable fortune, which he bequeathed to his nephew, leaving his widow to be provided for by the country. He was among the generals who at one time constantly attended the Court, and was highly esteemed by George III. and Queen Charlotte. In early life he had passed some years in Germany, and was one of the last survivors of the Seven years' war, on which he wrote some sagacious comments. His name is known in the army by his "Code of Regulations," a useful work, mainly adapted from the German.—AUTHOR.

1812. Æt. 30.

spite of the remonstrances of the Whigs, they determined to take the sense of the House on the appointment.

The motion was not, this time, intrusted to Lord Althorp, it being thought that Lord Milton, from having voted in support of the Duke on Colonel Wardle's original motion, would be less open to the imputation of factious or personal motives; and it was, perhaps, hoped to identify him more closely with the cause,—his father, Lord Fitzwilliam, like Lord Spencer, holding aloof from it. He was, at this time, a pale, slim young man, little known, except by his great election contest in Yorkshire. His health had been so delicate as to prevent his going to college, and the deficiencies of home education were sufficiently visible in his bashful and constrained demeanour; but he had a high spirit, and a resolute will, that made him a ready associate in any undertaking of a bold or decided character.

Vote of censure brought forward by Lord Milton.

The question was brought forward on the 6th of June (1812) in the form of a vote of censure on the Ministers. Lord Milton made a manly speech, entering at length into the reasons against the Duke's re-appointment. He boldly challenged the Ministers to say whether they would have ventured to have recommended to the office a person in any way circumstanced as the Duke, his rank only excepted, adding rather an embarrassing question,—had the same indulgence been extended to Lord Melville? Mr. Perceval followed,

making a very clever but disingenuous defence of the Duke, whose resignation he endeavoured, by a long train of reasoning, to prove a purely voluntary act, independent of any vote of the House, and therefore no bar to a re-appointment. With all its fallacies, this speech was replete with persuasive power, and highly successful. Instead of setting up some practised debater to reply to it, Mr. Whitbread very unwisely put forward Lord Althorp, who was little qualified for such an encounter. The meshes of Mr. Perceval's sophistry were too skilfully woven for him to unravel. He contented himself with a modest attempt to show how the sense of the House, as indicated by their proceedings, had virtually been declared against the Duke's re-appointment. Even this he did not make very clear: the details necessary to be explained seem to have confused him, and they required a distinctness of statement which he could not be expected to command. He was more happy in treating of Colonel Wardle's connection with the case,—for, although the mere mention of the name caused him to be interrupted by loud cries of "Hear," he would not be put down, and observed that he did not see how the Duke's position was improved by Colonel Wardle's alleged misconduct,—it not being the character of the counsel on either side that made a cause better or worse,—that must depend on the credit of the witnesses, and not of the advocate. The speech was a brief and honest defence of the vote he was about to give,

1812. Æt. 30.

1812. Æt. 30. rather than an appeal to the understanding or feelings of his hearers. In point of ability, it certainly fell short of Lord Milton's. This nobleman was thought so decidedly his superior, that Lady Spencer shortly afterwards said to him, "Recollect, when you become Premier, you must give Althorp a place." Nor did this seem so improbable an event, for he had an original if not a comprehensive mind, as he showed by his views on the Corn Laws, which were in advance of the age; and he was one of the most industrious and estimable of the young nobility. But the attractions of a happy home, with the cares of a princely estate, diverted him from the steady pursuit of politics, and he was besides far too careless of the opinion of those with whom he acted, to be the leader of a party in a popular assembly.

Its defeat. Mr. W. Elliot, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Charles Wynn followed on the same side as Lord Althorp. Their speeches may still be read with interest as expressions of high feeling and powerful argument; but their efforts were wasted on a House already pre-determined, and the motion was rejected by a large majority.

This unsatisfactory conclusion of Lord Althorp's first essay in politics did not raise his opinion of politicians. The vote he had obtained against the Duke in 1808 had been solemnly given, with the general concurrence of the nation,—after a very long and laborious inquiry,—on grounds avowedly

judicial. He now saw it virtually reversed, after a few hours' discussion,—under the most flimsy pretences,—for mere party considerations; and, in the eager competition of the most eminent statesmen for Court favour, all sense of the dignity and consistency of Parliament, as well as of public morality, appeared to be equally overlooked. William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton had the honesty to discountenance these proceedings, and, withdrawing from their party, to vote with the small minority in the division; but such instances were rare. It was manifest that the feelings, prevalent in the great body of the House before the Duke of York's trial, had resumed their sway, and that, from various motives, an overwhelming majority were indisposed to any correction of public abuses, that involved the disturbance of party ties, or the displeasure of the Court. 1812. Æt. 30.

The leather duty.

It was at this time that the town of Northampton was thrown into consternation by a proposed increase of the leather duty. As the manufacture of shoes supported a large part of the population, all parties united against the measure. They placed their case in Lord Althorp's hands; and he took great pains to make himself master of it, not being insensible to the credit of obtaining a victory over the Ministers on this occasion. When the day of the discussion drew near, he was no less surprised than mortified at hearing that a young member, Mr. Brougham, a barrister, wholly unconnected with Northampton,

1812. Æt. 30.

intended to bring forward the question. He immediately sought that gentleman, whom he knew but slightly, and remonstrated with him on the course he was taking. Mr. Brougham, however, insisted that he was acting under a promise to the shoemakers of Stafford, and could not recede. Lord Althorp, though by no means satisfied, was obliged to yield, and accordingly, on the 26th of June, 1812, Mr. Brougham moved the rejection of the tax, and Lord Althorp seconded him: their speeches were characteristic of the men. Mr. Brougham with great cleverness and command over details, in which he already shone, proved how severe a pressure would result from the tax on the operations of husbandry,—to the necessary diminution of the profits of the farmer, and the rent of the landlord;—in short, he made an excellend landlord's speech, in the hope of awakening the cupidity of the country gentlemen, and gaining their support. All he said was quite true; but in the state of unexampled prosperity of the landed interest, it certainly had no claim to any relief from taxation. Lord Althorp, although dependent for his seat on the landlords, passed over their grievances without notice, and rested his case on the hardship of the tax on the agricultural labourer and the artisan,—whose wages seldom bear a just proportion to the price of the articles of their consumption,—and whose condition, I may add, was at that time much less attended to by the legislature than at present. His argument

Speeches by Mr. Brougham and Lord Althorp.

was clearly stated; and the only defence lay in the necessities of the country, which made a sound system of taxation impracticable. The tax was carried by a large majority. 1812. Æt. 30.

This dispute between Lord Althorp and Mr. Brougham ended in a warm and lasting friendship. The first advances were (I suspect), made by Mr. Brougham, who probably felt, on reflection, that to have waived his right in favour of a young nobleman in Lord Althorp's position, would have been better for the cause he advocated, and for the interests of the Liberal party. They often met at Mr. Whitbread's house, where, even in the society of Sheridan, Tierney, and other wits and statesmen, Mr. Brougham's superior genius and accomplishments already obtained general admiration;*—and it was natural that Lord Althorp,

* Mr. Brougham had entered Parliament in 1810. His first speech, which was in support of Mr. Whitbread's motion on the Expedition to the Scheldt, had satisfied neither his friends nor himself, though parts of it were very able. The late Mr. Creevey often mentioned, that immediately after the debate Mr. Brougham had written to him, announcing his utter failure, and that he "must turn to something else." On the 15th of June following, he made his speech on the continuance of the Slave Trade—the first in that series of Parliamentary triumphs which raised him to the highest rank among British orators and statesmen. His varied talents perhaps appeared to equal advantage in the intercourse of domestic life. He was capable of investing the least attractive subjects with interest. My friend, the late Viscountess Eversley (Mr. Whitbread's younger daughter), recollected a group of fashionable ladies listening, at breakfast one morning at Southill, with breathless attention to his description of the habits of bees, which he made as charming as a fairy tale. He was also a first-rate mimic, so that John Kemble, being asked what he thought of him, answered:—"If I could get him on the boards for a season, it would make my fortune." Even Mr. Rogers, though not addicted to praise, observed, as Mr. Brougham was stepping into his

1812-13. Æt. 30-31.

who was modesty itself, should have been gratified by the attentions of a man so highly gifted, and who thought on politics as he did; for Mr. Brougham, being left free by the Whig peer who had brought him into Parliament, was usually found among the zealous supporters of Mr. Whitbread.

Peace Preservation Bill.

Lord Althorp spoke during the Session on the Peace Preservation Bill, which had been introduced to repress the outrages in the hosiery districts of Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham. Considering the destruction of property that had taken place, and the general alarm throughout those districts, the measure was not, I think, of a very severe character. Its main feature was an extension of the jurisdiction of the local magistracy. The Whigs tacitly acquiesced in it. Not so Mr. Brougham, who, with Mr. Whitbread and his followers, ascribed the agitation to temporary causes which were already removed, and denounced the Bill as unnecessary, and therefore unjustifiable. Lord Althorp held the same views, but expressed them with more moderation. Other speakers near him had dwelt with gross exaggeration on the faults of the magistracy, a popular argument at the time; but, with the love of truth that kept him from propitiating the landlords, he now showed himself equally independent of the people,—for he particularly guarded himself against being believed to approve of this line of argument, and desired

chaise at the door of Southill—"There go Demosthenes, Bacon, and George Selwyn, all in the same chaise."—AUTHOR.

it to be distinctly understood, that his opposition did not arise from any apprehensions that the power entrusted to the magistrates would be abused. 1813. Æt. 31.

It was by acts like these—by inflexible steadiness of principle—by sincerity, coupled with too much kindness to give just cause of offence,—that he early gained the appellation of "honest Jack Althorp."

Except a single speech, a clear, sensible, and argumentative one, against the leather tax, Lord Althorp took no part in the debates of 1813; and, I suspect, very seldom attended them. His zeal for Catholic emancipation, which never flagged during his Parliamentary life, alone brought him down to vote for Mr. Grattan's Bill, which, after a gleam of success, was defeated on the First Reading. I can find his name in no other division. He was, in fact, becoming weary of politics. The unexpected turn of events, both in Russia and Spain, unfavourable to Napoleon, gave almost absolute power to the Ministers. Parliament did scarcely more than register their edicts; and as this was an occupation little to his taste, he gradually ceased to attend the House, unless he happened to be called there by the business of his constituents.

Athletic exercises.

This estrangement from politics left more time at his disposal than he was likely to employ to advantage; for, independently of his not being at all bookish, his delight in athletic exercises remained as strong as ever. Indeed, he was of a full, robust habit, that seemed to make them necessary to his health. When he first settled in London, he gave

1813. Æt. 31. many hours to rackets; and what was still less refined, he made a real study of boxing, taking lessons from the best instructors, whilst practising most assiduously, and as he boasted, with great success. He had many matches with his school-fellow, Lord Byron, with whom it appears to have been, at this time, a favourite pursuit. Those who witnessed his exploits with the gloves, and observed his cool and steady eye, his broad chest and muscular limbs, and, above all, felt his hard blows, would have been justified in saying "that he was born to be a prize-fighter, rather than a minister of state." Even when a Minister, he sometimes startled his colleagues by a display of knowledge on this subject, by way of illustration, which they could not help thinking rather misapplied. How deeply rooted were these feelings could not be more graphically described, than by the following extract from a letter, kindly addressed to me by his friend, Mr. Evelyn Denison,* referring to a visit at Wiseton, long after Lord Althorp had quitted office:

"When we were at Wiseton, something was said about a recent case of stabbing with a knife. Lord Spencer observed that, in his opinion, cases of stabbing arose from the manly habit of boxing having been discouraged. The pros and cons of boxing were discussed—Lord Spencer became eloquent. He said his conviction of the advantages of boxing was so strong, that he had been seriously considering whether it was not a duty he owed to the

* The Right Honourable J. Evelyn Denison, afterwards Speaker of the House of Commons, and Viscount Ossington.—EDITOR.

public to go and attend every prize-fight which took place, and so to encourage the noble science to the extent of his power. I have said, he became eloquent. It was the one time in my life, in the House of Commons, or out of it, that I heard him speak with eagerness, and almost with passion. He gave us an account of prize-fights which he had attended, how he had seen Mendoza knocked down for the first five or six rounds by Humphreys, and seeming almost beat, till the Jews got their money on; when a hint being given him, he began in earnest and soon turned the tables. 1813–14. Æt. 31-32.

"He described the fight between Gully and the Chicken. How he rode down to Brickhill,—how he was loitering about the inn door, when a barouche-and-four drove up with Lord Byron and a party, and Jackson the trainer,—how they all dined together, and how pleasant it had been.* Then the fight the next day: the men stripping, the intense excitement, the sparring; then the first round, the attitude of the men—it was really worthy of Homer."

The Pytchley Hunt.

After all, Lord Althorp's great pleasure and interest were in the country. He had not yet

* The following addition to this anecdote I owe to an old friend of Lord Althorp's:—"When the party assembled at the 'George,' they found that there were not beds enough for them, so they tossed up, and the winners went to bed first, and were called at a certain hour, when the losers took their places. Among the company was the Rector of Blisworth, in Northamptonshire—Parson Ambrose—a man too well known in sporting circles. He disgraced a profession which he ought to have adorned, for he was clever, and had a remarkably fine delivery. Macklin, the actor, left him 50*l.* to preach his funeral-sermon. He passed as the natural son of an Irish Peer, whose loose morals had descended to him. Obliged at last to fly from his creditors, he died abroad in obscurity and want." One evil of the boxing mania of that day was the very bad company into which its votaries were then drawn. Lord Althorp made acquaintances among the pugilists, but no friends. Mr. Jackson, though a frequent guest at the table of Lord Byron, was certainly never at a party at Spencer House.—AUTHOR.

1813-14. Æt. 31-32.

taken up agriculture in earnest, as, indeed, few young men of rank do, unless on their own estates; but he found a certain amount of business, and constant amusement, in field sports. His father and grandfather had kept the Pytchley hounds in a style that made the hunt the pride of the squires in the Midland districts. The kennels had been built in Althorp Park, as well as at Pytchley; and the hunting was equally divided between the two districts. When the hounds were at Althorp unbounded hospitality prevailed, both at Lord Spencer's and the principal seats in the neighbourhood; and when they removed to Pytchley,* many country gentlemen actually shut up their houses, and removed with them, the ladies accompanying their lords to the old mansion, and forming a society among themselves. Lord Spencer attended little to details: his merit was in introducing an excellent system of management, for which his tact and personal weight obtained general acquiescence. Such was the deference shown to him that it would have been considered a breach of etiquette for any one, except his huntsman, to go before him. Perhaps few could have done so,

* The Club House at Pytchley was of native yellow stone, and with its gables, chimneys, and mullioned windows, was a fine specimen of the old English manor-house. A print of it is preserved in Baker's "History of Northamptonshire." It was pulled down in 1828. The estate became afterwards the property of Lord Overstone. "Quarterly Review," v. ci. p. 48.—AUTHOR.

The old gateway with pinnacles, of Pytchley Manor House, which figures in a hunting picture at Althorp, now forms the entrance to Overstone Park.—EARL SPENCER.

for he was a good rider, and had superb horses. His retirement, when appointed to the Admiralty, caused general regret; and the hunt languished during the twelve following years, when Lord Althorp succeeded to it, to the great delight of the county. The manner in which he acquitted himself in the charge gave it additional distinction. During eight months of the year he made it his sole employment,—as if he had no other vocation, and could think of nothing else. In the cub-hunting season he even quitted Althorp, to reside for weeks at a cottage he had taken with his friend Sir Charles Knightley* at Brigstock, in order that he might be near one of the kennels. Many years later, when he had become leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, he once went with a party to Deville, the craniologist. On his return, he said Deville knew nothing about the matter, for he had entirely missed and passed over his leading passion. A friend asked what that passion was. Lord Althorp replied, "To see sporting dogs hunt"—that was the thing that gave him the greatest pleasure in the world. He had then given up hunting; and he said he dared not trust himself even to take an occasional look at the hounds, for if he once began he could not help going into it desperately.

1813–14. Æt. 31-32.

* Sir Charles Knightley, Bart., of Fawsley, many years one of the members for the county. Lieutenant Drummond (Lord Althorp's private secretary) told me, that Lord Althorp would often dwell with admiration to him on Sir Charles's generous character and manly qualities.—AUTHOR.

1813–14. Æt. 31-32.

He fully maintained the reputation he had obtained at the University as a hard rider; but seldom trusted himself, as he told me, without a pilot, attaching himself for that purpose to the man of whose judgment he had the highest opinion. He had but a loose seat, and met with frequent falls, some very severe; having frequently dislocated his shoulder, this induced him to have one of his whippers-in instructed at the Northampton Infirmary how to put it in, an operation which the man had frequently to practise in the field; indeed, the joint became so liable to dislocation, that it once went out by his merely throwing up his arm in leaping over a fence. His unaffected good humour, and the spirit and liberality with which the hunt was conducted, made him very popular. Some plain country squires observed, when he took to politics, that whatever might be his success, he never could add to his celebrity. He certainly spared neither time nor money in keeping up the character of the hunt. The pack was of the highest caste; and his experiment of having his hounds lighter and quicker than was at the time generally approved, completely succeeded. Indeed, he knew well the proper shape of hounds, and how to cross them, and thoroughly understood their temper and genius. "No one (writes Sir Charles Knightley to me) knew more of hunting than he did." He usually had about thirty hunters, the best that money could purchase, and his men were also selected without regard to expense. The whole

establishment cost him from 4000*l.* to 5000*l.* a-year, a sum that he could ill spare, and which was the source of much embarrassment to him in after life. 1813-14. Æt. 31-32.

The veteran sportsman* above named, whose fame in Northamptonshire stands only next to Lord Althorp's, descants with natural enthusiasm on the exploits of those days. "It is, perhaps," he says, "too much the habit of old sportsmen to hold up the system of past days as preferable to those of the present. We are inclined, however, to believe that, in the records of the Pytchley Hunt, such splendid sport was never known as at that period. Lord Althorp kept a hunting journal;† and, if it be now among the records of Althorp, it will tell how they found at Purser's Hill, ran over old Naseby field to Althorp in fifty minutes, and how, after a short check, they hunted him over the finest part of Leicestershire, and killed him at Sir Henry Halford's at Wistow; how at another time they found him in Crick osier-bed, ran over Crick and Yelvertoft Field, over Hony Hill into Leicestershire, almost without a check, and how, after being bothered by sheep, they dropped to hunting, and killed him in view at Brunlong Thorpe; how on another day they found him at Crick Gorse, ran over Clay Coton and

* Sir Charles Knightley is understood to have written the passage in "Silk and Scarlet," p. 74.—AUTHOR.

† From my knowledge of the country a run from Purser's Hill to Althorp is possible, but as Althorp is in the opposite direction to Leicestershire, where the run concluded, I cannot think that "Althorp" is the place, but "Holthorpe." I have searched the chase-book, but without success, for this run.—EARL SPENCER.

1813–14. Æt. 31-32. Lilburn Field, under Hemplow Hill, over Cold Ashby Field, across Naseby open field, by Silver Croft, through the corner of Marston Wood, and killed him in the open close to Marston Trussell, in an hour and seventeen minutes, after one of the most brilliant runs on record; and again how, twice in the same year, they found at Crick, and each time killed him in Badby Wood. We could recount many other runs of the highest order; but it might be tedious to readers of the present time to read the narrations of days so long past. Pytchley was then at the zenith of its glory."

The sport attracted many strangers from a distance, among whom were Sir David Baird, the great soldier, and Lord Alvanley, the great wit; and it might well be said, in the words of the old song,

> "A pack of such hounds, and a set of such men,
> 'Tis a shrewd chance if ever you meet with again."

Lord Althorp's hunting journals are still preserved among the treasures of the MSS. Library at Althorp. They descend to minute details, the merits or demerits of the hounds, as well as the extent and quality of each day's sport, being given at some length.* The chase-books, of which they form a part, comprising twenty-four quarto volumes bound in green morocco, go as far back as 1773, and will be consulted with interest in a future day by curious inquirers "de re venaticâ."

* Three extracts from Lord Althorp's MSS. are given in the Appendix as a specimen.

Lord Althorp had from a boy been fond of his gun, the 1st of September being always with him "dies albo notanda lapillo." He spared no pains to become a good shot, and if only partially successful, it was not from want of practice. He kept an account of every shot he fired in the course of the year, whether he missed or killed, and made up the book periodically. 1813–14. Æt. 31-32.

## CHAPTER IX.

MARRIAGE.—LADY ALTHORP.—THE SPENCER FAMILY.—WISETON HALL.—LORD ALTHORP A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

1814. Æt. 32.

Lord Althorp's marriage with Miss Acklom.

WITH the tastes and pursuits described in the preceding pages, Lord Althorp's character might have seriously deteriorated, but for an event which in his case, as in that of most other men, formed the turning point in his life. He had reached the age of thirty-two, and was still a bachelor, yet without having had a disappointment in love; so he thought his destiny fixed, and observing some impatience in his parents to see the next generation of their descendants, he strongly urged his brother Robert to marry, assuring him that he should never do so himself. Robert, a joyous, light-hearted sailor, although always falling in love, was too fond of his profession to close with the proposal, and, as it happened, rather fortunately, for within a year Lord Althorp's feelings had entirely changed. In that interval he had made the acquaintance and gained the affections of the only daughter of Mr. Acklom, of Wiseton Hall, Nottinghamshire, a young heiress, about ten years his junior, whom

he married on the 14th of April, 1814. A singular dispensation from the ordinary laws of courtship alone brought him this piece of good fortune. The love, I may now venture to say without a serious breach of confidence, was, at first, all on the lady's side. Having become on a very slight acquaintance deeply interested in Lord Althorp, she contrived to let him know it,—a hazardous experiment, only to be justified by the result, which in this instance was a very satisfactory one, for a more attached and united couple than Lord and Lady Althorp perhaps never existed. 1814. Æt. 32.

A lady* who was among the early visitors of the newly married pair, has favoured me with the following sketch of them. "Lady Althorp was in person rather stout, and without pretensions to regular beauty; but there was something in her countenance very prepossessing, and to me she was extremely attractive. She was well read, clever, and had a quick perception of the character of others, with much self-dependence. Altogether, she was not a common or every-day character. She (I believe) liked me, and we drew towards each other; so I tell of her as I found her. Her cheerfulness and agreeableness made a great impression on me. Mrs. Acklom,† who was staying in the house at the same time, seemed rather a disagreeable woman; and it Character and description of Lady Althorp.

* This lady, the daughter of a nobleman who was a friend and contemporary of Earl Spencer, has modestly declined to let me mention her name; which I regret, as it would give authority to her statement.—AUTHOR.

† She was a sister of Lord Bandon.—AUTHOR.

1814. Æt. 32.

was very pleasing to witness the respect and attention with which Lord and Lady Althorp both treated her; and they made others do the same. It was evidently a very happy marriage. I must mention an instance that came under my observation of the confidence with which Lord Althorp treated his wife. In the morning, when he went out hunting, all his letters were brought to her; she opened them, reserving those which he must answer himself, and setting aside the others which she thought useless. I remember her laughing, as she said, 'Ladies must not write him love-letters.'"

This portrait of Lady Althorp admits of some additional touches, which I shall endeavour, however imperfectly, to supply. She had travelled abroad a great deal with her parents, on account of her father's declining health; and, with an active mind and considerable powers of observation, she had a vein of humour, which made her a very pleasant companion. If her manner was a little too decided, it had a freshness and frankness that won confidence. Lord Althorp used to say, she was the only woman with whom he had never felt shy. Like him, she had not less moral courage than active benevolence. When a girl of fifteen, she happened to be with her parents among the few English travellers unexpectedly detained at Vienna, on its capture by Napoleon after the battle of Wagram. Their only hope of escaping a foreign prison lay in immediate departure from the city, and this was only accomplished by her intervention. With no companion

but her maid, she almost forced her way into the presence of Marshal Mortier (the military commandant), as he sat in the Hotel de Ville, surrounded by a large staff, listening to the complaints by the burghers of the oppressions and extortions of the soldiery. The Marshal had known the family in England, and it was hoped would befriend them on the occasion. However, he merely glanced at her petition, and sternly bade her stand aside until others had been attended to, whose business was of more importance. The maid was frightened, and would have drawn her away; but she persisted in awaiting the Marshal's decision. Happily, his sternness* was only assumed: touched by the young lady's filial devotion, he had at once resolved to grant her suit. As soon as an aide-de-camp of the Emperor who was by his side had withdrawn, he asked Miss Acklom, in the kindest manner, how many passes she wanted. She had the presence of mind at once to perceive the drift of the question, and answered "Three," with the view of serving two English families of her father's acquaintance at the same hotel. The passes were immediately handed to her, and she brought them in triumph to her parents; and in a few hours the three carriages were at the gates of Vienna, on the way to Berlin.

1814. Æt. 32.

* The Marshal bore a high character for humanity and probity. A British officer of my acquaintance, who fell into his hands during the Peninsular war, met with almost paternal treatment, from his grateful recollection of kindness shown him by the officer's family in early years. Unlike most of his brother Marshals, he spurned to enrich himself by foreign plunder, and died poor.—AUTHOR.

1814. Æt. 32. Miss Acklom's exertions did not end here. An English family, who had failed in obtaining a pass, determined to follow Mr. Acklom and his friends in a fourth carriage, on the mere chance of making the three passes available for their escape, in the confusion from the crowd entering and quitting the city.

As the party issued from the gates, the fourth carriage, as might have been expected, was stopped. The officer on guard was deaf to all entreaties and expostulations, until Miss Acklom, putting her head out of the window, called out to her countrymen, "that instead of giving so much trouble, it was surely better for them to return to the hotel for their pass, and the other carriages would wait for them." Her tone and demeanour subdued all suspicion. The officer expressed himself perfectly satisfied, and allowed the whole party to proceed without further molestation.

Diana Vernon could not have shown more self-possession and courage in such an emergency: and indeed there were many traits common to that heroine and Miss Acklom. The latter made an excellent wife, and no romance could exaggerate the affection with which she inspired her husband.

Leaving for a time Lord Althorp thus happily settled, let us take a glance at the other children of Lord and Lady Spencer, consisting of three sons and two daughters.

Brothers and sisters rd

Robert Cavendish, the second son, was a commander in the Navy. He had joined the Tigre

(Captain Hallowell) in 1804, being then thirteen years of age, and from that time had visited his family only at distant intervals, being almost always on active service. He had served with distinction in Egypt at the bloody, though unsuccessful, attack on Rosetta; and, in 1809, was among the first of the boarders who carried the Lampriere, at the capture and destruction of the French convoy in the Bay of Rosas, under Lord Collingwood.* Devoted to a profession with which his father was identified, of a sunny happy disposition, and as refined as if he had never shared the rough gambols of the cockpit, can it be wondered at that he was especially endeared to both parents? Indeed, he was the favourite of the family. Lord Althorp, far from feeling any jealousy, was proud of him, and almost looked up to him. They all were confident of his doing honour to the name they bore. Nor were they disappointed. As early as in the year after Lord Althorp's marriage, Captain Spencer, being employed in the expedition to New Orleans, penetrated into the suburbs of the town, and obtaining such information as enabled the Admiral to make the necessary arrangements for the disembarkation of the troops, surprised and captured the enemy's picket at the landing-place: he bore a distinguished part in the assault, from which, to the surprise of all who witnessed his gallantry, he escaped unhurt. On the conclusion of hostilities he was charged with the settlement of the

1814. Æt. 32.

* Sir Augustus Clifford (then a Lieutenant of the Tigre) was in the same boat.—AUTHOR.

1814. Æt. 32. claims of the Indian tribes in British pay; and after living with them several weeks, he performed the task most successfully. His various services secured the warm thanks of Sir Alexander Cochrane, who appointed him to the command of the frigate Cydnus. His future career will be noticed in a later portion of this work.

Frederick, the third son (the late Earl Spencer, K.G.), was a spirited lad, wishing to be in the Navy, like his brother Robert. He became an Admiral and C.B. It was at his suggestion and earnest request, that this work has been written.

George, the fourth son, was at Harrow,—he was intended for the Church. He was an amiable boy, and an excellent scholar for his age. Like Lord Althorp, he afterwards distinguished himself at Cambridge, where I knew him well, for we were of the same standing at Trinity College.

Lady Georgiana, mentioned above, was even more lovely than her mother had been, and her sweet disposition and engaging manners made her a general favourite.*

Lady Sarah had, in the preceding year, married the Honourable William Henry Lyttelton, half-brother of Lord Lyttelton, whom he afterwards succeeded in the title. He was a young man of

* Lady Georgiana afterwards married Lord George Quin, second son of the Marquis of Headfort. She died young. A pleasantry of Lady Spencer's respecting these ladies ought not to be omitted here. When it was the fashion of the nobility to marry actresses, she said, "If my daughters don't go off this season, I shall bring them out on the stage."—AUTHOR.

decided ability, as he showed by some clever speeches in the House of Commons, where he usually acted with his brother-in-law. Lady Lyttelton survived him, and was highly esteemed by all who knew her. 1814. Æt. 32.

A few weeks after his marriage, Lord Althorp proceeded with his bride to Wiseton Hall, intending to make it their future country residence.

Residence at Wiseton Hall.

His first impression of his new domain could not have been encouraging. A journey of one hundred and forty miles from London brought him to the small town of East Retford, on the borders of Nottinghamshire, on leaving which he soon caught a distant view of some rising ground that marked the position of Wiseton. The approach to it lay through an extensive plain, highly cultivated, but with scarcely a tree, or even a hedge, the broad ditches by which it was intersected serving the double purpose of drains and landmarks. It was like a Flemish landscape, equally unpicturesque and destitute of interest. After an hour's drive he crossed the Chesterfield Canal, and just beyond it the horses stopped at a gate which his servants had to open, for there was no lodge, and a few yards further, within a paddock of thirty acres, among some scattered elms, stood a lonely mansion which barely deserved the name of the Hall. It had been built by an ancestor of Lady Althorp's in the early part of the last century, being originally an oblong square of four windows, three stories high. As the family increased in wealth and consideration, a wing of one story with three windows had been added on each

1814. Æt. 32.

side, which gave rather an imposing appearance to the south front; but the north, or entrance front, defied all architectural rules, the windows being of unequal sizes, and in the lowest tier imperfect, while the entrance door was so mean that it seemed to lead only to the servants' offices.

Lord Althorp alighted from his carriage, and with Lady Althorp went through the house, which presented as few attractions within as without. The rooms were small and ill-proportioned, and looked still worse from the soiled, old-fashioned paper that barely covered the walls. The scanty furniture that remained in them was dingy and nearly worn out, the ceilings were discoloured with damp, and traces of long neglect, owing to the protracted absence of the family, were obvious in every apartment.

Whatever might have been Lord Althorp's disappointment, it soon yielded to his desire to please his wife. Her childhood had been passed at the Hall, and to return to it was one of the dreams of her youth. It was easy for her to persuade him that the house was capable of great improvement, and might be made at least very comfortable by a liberal outlay, which her fortune gave him the means of providing. One powerful consideration with him was, that he would find at Wiseton a degree of liberty and command of his time, such as he could never expect at Althorp. Accordingly, arrangements were made for preparing the house for their reception without delay.

Whilst the works were in progress Lord Althorp

engaged Dallington Park, in Northamptonshire, for a year, and he also took an excellent house in Pall Mall: his chambers in the Albany he parted with to Lord Byron. 1814. Æt. 32.

Before the year had passed, a host of bricklayers, decorators, and upholsterers, with the aid of a London architect, had effected a thorough transformation at the Hall. Some rooms had been added, others enlarged, and all embellished in the best style of the day. The faults of the original construction, which baffled the skill of the architect, were partially removed or concealed by the ingenuity of the upholsterer, whose cabinets, curtains, and paper-hangings succeeded in imparting to rooms—certainly unworthy of them—an air of cheerfulness and comfort. When Lord Althorp returned in the following summer, he vied with Lady Althorp in commendation of all that had been done in his absence, although the expenses incurred fell little short of 10,000*l.*

The grounds were claimed by Lady Althorp as her peculiar province—they had fallen into a sad condition. She immediately laid out a garden in the south front, which she stocked with the choicest flowers. Shrubs gradually arose on the lawn. The only ornamental trees she found there were two deciduous cypresses—fine specimens of their kind, but planted so close as to be spoiling each other. Lord Althorp undertook to remove one of them to a proper distance, which proved a very expensive and troublesome work, and the tree did not long survive it. He was more successful in his plantations of

1814. Æt. 32.

forest trees, with which he clothed the contiguous eminences on the north and west, and these now form the chief ornaments of the place. He also completed a circuitous walk of about a mile, embracing the lawn and home plantations, and within this inclosure the slopes of Gringly Hill; and even the banks of the canal produced a pleasing effect, to which the only drawback was the unfortunate proximity of the River Idle to the canal. Here also were extensive views over the neighbouring lowlands, which had already acquired such local celebrity as to be noticed in the county history.* In a district more favoured by nature they would have been passed without observation.

Such was the place in which Lord Althorp now settled himself, and where he never failed to pass part of every year during the remainder of his life. The secret of his partiality for it was the happiness he enjoyed there in his union with Lady Althorp. This shed over all the objects about him a degree of interest which gave them a fictitious value. He could nowhere else obtain so much of her society, or see her equally to advantage. Her family had been the possessors of Wiseton for several generations—indeed, one of her ancestors, a youth of great promise, had "gone out" with Fairfax, and fallen at the siege of Scarborough.† Their position as country gentry, in a remote district, seldom going to

* Thoroton's "History of Nottinghamshire," v. iii., p. 310.

† Major Acklom, who was much esteemed by General Lambert, fell in 1645.—AUTHOR.

London, and attending personally to the management of their property, necessarily identified them with their tenants and dependants more closely than would have been the case had they been of higher rank, or living among a more refined population. Lady Althorp was deservedly dear to her humble neighbours. The village lay within half a mile of the Hall, and she often cheered the cottagers by her friendly inquiries, as well as by her bounty. Her warm and genuine sympathy in their distresses and enjoyments presented her in a new character to her husband, and roused him to exertion in the way of his duty, more approved by his conscience than his former pursuits as a young nobleman wholly bent on amusement. Addison justly observes, "There is no blessing in life that is in any way comparable to the enjoyment of a discreet and virtuous friend. It eases and unloads the mind, clears and improves the understanding, engenders thoughts and knowledge, animates virtue and good intentions, soothes and allays the passions, and finds employment for most of the vacant hours of life."* He who meets with such a friend in his wife, may well regard himself as highly favoured by Providence; and this was the case with Lord Althorp.

1814–15. Æt. 32-33.

The Wiseton estate consisted of some 2000 acres. Lord Althorp took the home farm into his own hands, and gave a degree of attention to its management, which he afterwards considered not repaid by its results. He once confessed to me, that agri-

* "Spectator," No. 93.

1814-15. Æt. 32-33.

culture had always been a losing concern to him. It was on a stock farm alone that he prided himself, and gained his reputation. He greatly improved the property, and not only built excellent farm-houses, but labourers' cottages, and he would allow only a single family to reside in each—a practice for which he was at first blamed by some sentimental writers, and subsequently praised by the public.

The neighbourhood of Wiseton was without any resident gentry, except clergymen. The incumbent, the Rev. Thomas Shepherd, was a frequent visitor at the Hall. He soon gained Lord Althorp's confidence, and was through life an intimate associate. This excellent man, who lived to a very great age, and, happily, without infirmity either of body or mind, dwelt warmly to me on Lord Althorp's merits. He described him as very happy in the retired life of Wiseton, keeping a large stud, though not hunting, and an eager sportsman. There were few days on which he did not accompany Lady Althorp in her ride or drive. She kept two pair of ponies, and was a good whip. Lord Althorp also read a good deal; and he used to send the new publications to Mr. Shepherd, in order that they might discuss them together, after the latter had read them.

Some of his old friends, who occasionally visited him from a distance, could not help smiling at his praise of the Hall and the surrounding country. All strangers were sure to be taken to the summit of Gringly Hill, to see the view, which embraces large parts of Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, and Lincoln-

shire, and only wants more marked features to be really beautiful. Nature, however, had not gifted him with a taste for the picturesque, but with what is much more desirable, a general disposition to be pleased and happy; like Cicero, he thought that a well-cultivated field is a beautiful sight, and the attention he gave to the details of agriculture was in itself a source of constant delight to him.

1814–15. Æt. 32-33.

## CHAPTER X.

### DEATH OF MR. WHITBREAD—DEATH OF LADY ALTHORP.

1815. Æt. 33.

Death of Mr. Whitbread.

THE death of Mr. Whitbread in the summer of 1815 deeply distressed Lord Althorp, who lost in him not only a personal friend, but a political guide, such as could not be replaced. The last year of his life had been embittered by severe disappointment, both in his private and political concerns. Nothing seemed to succeed with him. Lord Althorp was one of the few Liberals who supported him in his efforts to prevent the renewal of hostilities with France on the return of Napoleon from Elba, believing, (as I think most erroneously,) that the military system of the empire was less prejudicial to the interests of England than the despotism of the Bourbons,—a sentiment which met with no sympathy from the nation. All political differences, however, were dropped over his grave; and his long Parliamentary services, his undaunted courage, and unimpeachable integrity, received the warm commendations even of his opponents. He fell a victim to his passion for hard work; the addition of the superintendence of Drury Lane Theatre to his already too numerous employ-

ments being the supposed cause of the fatal aberration of mind which led him to commit suicide.* 1815-18. Æt. 33-36.

It is no slight homage to the memory of Mr. Whitbread, that as he was the first, so he proved to be the last leader of his party. Mr. Hume, Mr. Warburton, and other distinguished patriots, have had a following among the extreme Liberals, but their authority was only partially recognised. The place occupied by Mr. Whitbread has never been filled up since.

The consequences of Mr. Whitbread's death were soon seen in the utter disorganisation of his followers. Mr. Dudley Ward satirically described them as a corps of political riflemen recently embodied, which was employed in picking off place after place as opportunities offered, with as little principle as was generally found in irregular troops, like whom they allowed no mercy and granted no quarter. This mode of warfare produced little effect on the well-disciplined masses of the Ministerialists. Even a superfluous Lordship of the Admiralty, admitted on all sides to be a mere piece of patronage, successfully withstood their assaults,—although no more could be urged in its defence than that it was part of the machinery of Government. Lord Althorp, however, under these inauspicious circumstances, moved for a committee on public affairs, with a view to the retrenchment of unnecessary offices. He candidly admitted that

* A sketch of Mr. Whitbread's life will be found in a note at the end of the chapter.—AUTHOR.

1815–18. Æt. 33-36.

no great reduction of taxation could be expected from the enquiry, but the moral effect on the country would, he insisted, be valuable. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's miserable defence, which was a virtual surrender of the argument, combined with the eloquent speeches of Mr. Lamb and Mr. Brougham, perhaps contributed to procure for the motion a respectable minority.

Disturbances throughout the country.

The disturbances raging among the operatives, throughout the manufacturing districts in the north, during 1817-18, interrupted these petty contests, and led to stormy debates. The sudden cessation of the immense war expenditure in the home trade, and the altered character of the foreign trade, owing to foreign competition, had produced their natural results in a general stagnation of commerce, and extreme distress in the manufacturing interests. These were evils unavoidably attendant on the sudden transition from war to peace, and admitted of little mitigation from the interference of Government. Still some sympathy might have been shown for the sufferings of the people, and some efforts made, however experimental, to restore the tone of national industry. The Ministerial policy was of a very different complexion, as might be expected from the men who directed it, Lord Castlereagh, the leader of the House of Commons, and Lord Sidmouth, the Home Secretary: its main features being the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and an extension of the summary jurisdiction of the magistracy. Lord Grey delivered an elo-

quent protest in the Lords against these unconstitutional proceedings: the same language was held by several of the leading Liberals in the Commons, but they were feebly supported, and always opposed by large majorities, in which may be seen the names of many moderate Whigs, but never Lord Althorp's. From first to last he gave a most determined opposition to the course pursued by the Ministers, saying, as he really thought, that the only legitimate remedy for agitation and discontent among the lower classes was to be found in diminished taxation, the correction of administrative abuses, and a large measure of Parliamentary Reform. He imputed the angry feelings of the people to the pressure of distress, for which the Ministers alone were accountable, and which they were bound to remove,—instead of asking for arbitrary powers, and depriving all classes of the community of the only effective safeguard of personal liberty. On these principles he spoke and voted, in company with Mackintosh, Romilly, and Brougham; and so great was his eagerness, that no sooner had the House met in 1818, than he rose, even before the Royal speech was taken into consideration, and urged on the Ministers the necessity of repealing the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Of course no satisfactory answer was returned; so, as soon as the Address had been moved and seconded, he reiterated his complaint, and in strong language condemned the recent prosecutions of the Press, not only as unjust, but as wholly defeating their object,

1818. Æt. 33-36.

1818. Æt. 36.

it being clear that the oppression had enriched its victims, instead of ruining them. He was at the time seriously censured for holding this language, and no doubt took too favourable an estimate of the motives of the Radical leaders, who were generally low and unscrupulous men.

Making fair allowance for heated feelings, which betrayed him into a certain degree of credulity, experience has proved his views, wild as they appeared at the time, to be the reverse of unsound. No concessions, indeed, can prevent disaffection, or even seditious risings among the labouring classes; but they will make such movements comparatively harmless. Had his life been prolonged a very few years, he would have witnessed this result, in the events of the year 1848, when, through the great reforms carried, first by the Whigs, and then by Sir Robert Peel, an extensive movement of the labouring classes, at a period of unparalleled excitement throughout Europe, signally failed,—because the absence of all real grievances not only deprived them of the sympathy, but called forth the opposition of the middle orders, who at once, and as if with one mind, ranged themselves on the side of the Government.

Lord Althorp strongly opposes the ministerial measures.

Exasperation at these proceedings made him once more an eager politician, and what he had never been before, a man of business. Not content with a diligent attendance, he even became a frequent speaker in the House, allowing no opportunity to escape him of censuring the measures of the

Government. Considering that he was both slow in forming his opinions and cautious in delivering them, a mere glance at the character and the diversity of the subjects with which he grappled during the Session, will show that this was one of the most laborious tasks he had ever undertaken. The list, however imperfect, is not without interest, as proving how complicated the science of politics has become in this country since the days of Clarendon, or even of Godolphin, when only a few great party questions were admissible as topics of debate. No doubt, many speeches made by Lord Althorp were not reported; of those which are, these are the titles of the most important:—The Duty on Leather; The Bounty paid under Treaty with Spain for the suppression of the Slave Trade; The Grant for the Army, when he moved a reduction of five thousand men; The Indemnity in respect of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; The Grant for the Marriage of the Duke of Kent; The renewal of the Alien Act; The Bank Charter. In every one of these instances he disapproved and strongly objected to the course taken by the Government. 1818. Æt. 36.

Parliament was prorogued in May with a view to its early dissolution. Lord Althorp could not regret being relieved from attendance in the House, as the state of Lady Althorp's health had latterly begun to cause him serious anxiety. Their union had not yet been blessed with children, the only circumstance attending it which clouded their happiness; and it seemed doubtful, from the shock which her Dissolution of Parliament.

1818. Æt. 36.

constitution had received from some bad miscarriages, whether she would ever have a family. Her confinement, however, was expected in the course of June, and they awaited the event with very mixed feelings. Notwithstanding her strength of mind, to which I have before alluded, the recent death of the Princess Charlotte occasioned her some misgivings, which Lord Althorp, in spite of himself, was only too prone to share. To escape the noise of Pall Mall they accepted Lord Fitzwilliam's offer of his house in Halkin Street, then a very quiet and retired situation. There, on the 11th of June, Lady Althorp was delivered of a still-born son, after severe and protracted suffering. Two days' delirium followed, at the close of which she expired. Lord Althorp attended her devotedly to the last, and the recollection of that death-bed scene never faded from his mind. When he had deposited her remains in their last resting-place, he seemed as if left without an object on earth. Shrinking even from the affectionate attentions of his family, he went at once to Wiseton, where he passed several months in complete retirement. His chief occupation was in reading the Bible. At first he was perplexed with doubts and difficulties, the natural result of a previous (comparative) neglect of religion, but these gradually yielded to a humble and earnest search after truth; and he was able to write to his sister, Lady Lyttelton, that nothing but Christian faith and religious feelings could make him endure to live. The following letter to his old tutor (Mr. Allen)

Confinement and death of Lady Althorp.

Grief of Lord Althorp.

Seclusion at Wiseton.

gives an ingenuous description of the state of his mind at this time. 1818. Æt. 36.

"WISETON, *September 9th*, 1818.

"MY DEAR ALLEN,

"I am very much obliged to you for your kind letter of inquiry. I do not know exactly how to answer it, for I am really not able to describe the present state of my feelings. I cannot say that I am in a state at all resembling happiness; yet I cannot either say that I am miserable. Sometimes I am one, and sometimes the other. If I was confident that I should be able to persevere—so as to go to Heaven and again be with Esther—I should feel much happier; but I have no confidence in myself from my past experience, if my time of trial here is to be a long one. You see by what I am saying that I really do not know how to answer you as to whether my mind is really recovering its tone or not. If by recovering the tone is meant that it is to get into the same state in which it was before, I should be very sorry that it had. Of all my former pursuits, the only one in which I now take any interest is farming—that is, breeding of stock; it is the only one in which I can build castles in the air. I have been reading, of course, a good deal,—my two lines of reading are divinity and political economy: the first to do myself good: the other, to enable me to do good to others. I read them alternately—first, a treatise on one, then a treatise on the other; and, if you can recommend me any book on Divinity, I shall be obliged to you to do so, because the habits of my life render me ignorant as to what are the best books to read. I have gone through Watson's tracts among others; this, however, has been the most serious fag I have taken. With respect to Mrs. Acklom, though her coming down has not answered all my hopes, yet I am glad she did, but I have never been able to persuade her to leave the house:—her health, however, has not suffered,

1818. Æt. 36.

and she is in tolerable spirits generally. I have given up my plan of going abroad; there is no necessity for it, as I am sufficiently comfortable to do very well in England, and, without necessity, it would only be running away from the performance of my duties. If my father intends to be at the Sessions at Northampton, in October, I will go there, but I am not equal to take the chair, if he should not go. I will, in that case, go to Bouverie's, or somewhere in the neighbourhood, for a few days; but I have great objection to passing any length of time there this winter. I think there is nothing which would tend so much to depress me as the very different situation I should be in—viz., the being there while hunting was going on, and yet feeling myself unequal to engage in it. I think I have now answered as well as I can all your friendly inquiries. I was going to write to you, but I put it off from day to day, to ask you to solve two difficulties I have met with in reading. Ezekiel is supposed to have been carried away in the first lot of the Jews in the Babylonish Captivity, and to have prophesied in the first twenty years of it, I think. I cannot, therefore, understand how it happens that he says, in his threatenings against Jerusalem, that God would not spare the city, even if three such righteous men as Noah, Job, and *Daniel* were found in it, because Daniel, at that time, was a very young man, and had not proved himself a man of so high a calibre as he certainly did afterwards. This appears to me as if Ezekiel wrote later than he is supposed to have done, because this mode of expression would have been very proper after Daniel's death; or, indeed, after the reign of Darius the Mede, when he was put into the den of lions; but I cannot see how he could have been put upon a par with Noah and Job before he had proved by his conduct that he deserved it.

"My other difficulty is, Amos mentioning in his prophecies the constellation Orion; for it appears to me very improbable that a constellation should have been known by that name so early; this, however, is much more easily

explained than the other. But Orion being a name in the Grecian mythology, I have doubts whether it was known so soon as Amos wrote, which I think was before Greece had emerged from the grossest barbarity, and before, therefore, the name of Orion had ever been heard of. I asked Shepherd, the clergyman here, these two questions, but his answers were not satisfactory to me, so I send them to you.

1818. Æt. 36.

"Believe me,

"Yours most truly,

"ALTHORP."*

Lord Althorp's grief was too deeply seated to be otherwise than lasting; and for many years its poignancy remained unabated. When a young friend, afterwards Lord Carington, communicated to him his engagement with Miss Forester, he kindly wished him much happiness and long enjoyment of it, adding, however, in a faltering tone, "The pain

* My learned friend the Archbishop of Dublin (Dr. Trench) has kindly favoured me with the following interesting observations on Lord Althorp's letter:—"I do not think there is any real difficulty in the mention of Daniel by Ezekiel, and that in the same category with Noah and with Job. Putting the chronological data together, it can be shown that Daniel must, at the time when his prophecy was uttered, have been twelve or fourteen years at Babylon. His zeal for the law of his fathers showed itself from the first moment that he was there; and there is nothing wonderful that his reputation as an eminent servant of God should have grown to such a height that Ezekiel should number him with the most illustrious worthies of an elder age. It seems to me his declaration acquires additional strength and solemnity when he introduces a living servant of God, as well as two that were dead, and declares that these altogether should be unable by their righteousness more than to deliver their own souls."

"In regard of *Orion*, which, with the *Pleiades*, also occurs in Job, these are not the words which Amos, or the author of Job, employs. They are the Hebrew name of the constellation, which we have rendered by the Greek, inasmuch as it is not the Greek original, but that which we have also adopted as the English."—AUTHOR.

1818. Æt. 36. I have suffered from the loss of my wife has been such as no happiness could compensate." It was for her sake that Wiseton became his favourite residence. He never allowed any change to be made in her rooms; and during the first year of his solitude her garden was his only out-door interest. For her sake, too, he treated Mrs. Acklom with the most devoted tenderness and respect. She settled at Leamington, where he wrote to her every day, and frequently visited her. She was the only person, besides his father, to whom in writing he always subscribed himself, "Yours affectionately," for to his nearest relations it was only "Yours truly."* No one could understand the interest he took in her; for she had few recommendations of mind or temper, and had not been kind to him in earlier days; but they possessed one feeling in common, the deepest sorrow for Lady Althorp. After her daughter's death he was the only person (excepting her physician) whom she saw; and it is no more than justice to her to add that she appreciated his affection, and regarded him ever after as her son.

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## Mr. Whitbread.

Mr. Whitbread. The father of Mr. Whitbread was the representative of one of the few old Nonconformist families that still lingered in the rural districts, maintaining on moderate means a

* This is not quite correct, as to his earlier years at least. Even to his father (see *e.g.* the letter above, p. 126) he signed "yours most sincerely," or "most truly;" and in his letters from Cambridge it was even "yours."—Lord Lyttelton.

degree of gentility, though withheld by religious scruples from many opportunities of advancement. He inherited a small patrimony in Hertfordshire, on which his family had lived for many generations; but in a happy hour he left it to try his fortunes in London, and in a few years became the head clerk in a large brewery. So highly was he esteemed, that having had an opportunity of purchasing the concern, which he declined, as beyond his fortune, some richer friends combined to advance the requisite money, actually without his knowledge, leaving the repayment entirely to his honour. He justified their expectations by raising the house to the highest eminence in the trade, and thus was enabled to buy the Southill estate, in Bedfordshire, from Lord Torrington (which made him, next to the Duke, the largest proprietor in the county), and to leave great wealth besides, to his descendants. Whatever he undertook seemed to prosper; and not the least remarkable evidence of this was his winning, when a widower with three children, the affections of the youthful Lady Mary Cornwallis, who married him with the reluctant consent of her family. Some of the brilliant young Whigs who visited at Southill cited him as an instance, that success in business did not imply the possession of superior abilities—his were essentially practical. His son considered his judgment to be almost infallible. It required no filial partiality to describe him as a pious and eminently useful man. His intimate friendship with the celebrated Howard sprang more from kindred tastes, than from relationship. He was the confidant and munificent supporter of all Howard's benevolent projects, and, as far as lay in his own sphere, imitated his example.* There were the same habits of self-denial and indefatigable application,

* His charities were on a very grand scale, not only to hospitals and asylums, but to private individuals. Though not learned, he had a great respect for learning; and to him alone is due the tablet over the grave of Milton, which a century before had been announced in Toland's Life of the Poet, as *shortly* to be erected by the admirers of his genius.—AUTHOR.

with the same probity and simplicity of character, in both. Mr. Whitbread, also, like Howard, remained always a Nonconformist, notwithstanding the general practice of wealthy Dissenters to join the Church. He adhered strictly to the religious observances of his sect; and even after his second marriage, the anniversary of his first wife's death was kept in the family as a solemn fast.

Mr. Whitbread (Junior), was born in 1758. As an only son, he was the object of much parental solicitude, but of no indulgence. The strictness of life that usually prevailed among Dissenters extended to the bringing up of their children,* who were systematically guarded against all evil influences by early religious instruction, enforced by almost Spartan discipline. Mr. Whitbread had the blessing of an excellent mother, who instructed him from infancy, and, besides giving him his first lessons in the Scriptures, made his early years, by precept and example, the fruitful source of religious feeling to him through life. Much he also owed to his father's close and rigid supervision. In spite of sectarian prejudices, he received the most liberal education. A clergyman of acknowledged merit (Mr. afterwards Dr. Heath) accompanied him to Eton as his private tutor, an advantage enjoyed by very few of his more aristocratical schoolfellows. Extraordinary pains were also taken to secure his attention to study at Oxford, and at the first sign of his yielding to the temptations of the place, he was abruptly removed to Cambridge. As soon as he had taken

* Regarding children as creatures possessed of strong passions and desires, without reason or experience to control them, Mr. Howard thought that nature seemed to mark them out as subjects of absolute authority, and that the first and fundamental principle to be inculcated upon them was implicit and unlimited obedience. And as this cannot be effected by any reasoning process, before reason has its commencement, it must be done by coercion. Implicit obedience in a child he considered as essential to the groundwork of a good education; but the coercion he practised was the most calm and gentle, while at the same time it was steady and resolute. ("Life of Howard," p. 23.) This, also, was the opinion of Mr. Whitbread, and he acted up to it in the education of his son.—AUTHOR.

his degree he was sent on a foreign tour under the charge of Mr. Coxe, at that time better known as a travelling tutor than an historian, with whom he visited some of the German courts, as may be seen from Mr. Coxe's subsequently published "Travels," of which he received the dedication of the second volume.*

The care thus bestowed upon him met with an adequate return. He had not only attained a creditable proficiency in Greek and Latin, but was a good English scholar, and would have been a favourite candidate for any University prize given to English prose composition. He also acquired a facility in writing English verses, as he showed in after life, on many occasions, though he was no poet. He had many natural advantages. With an iron constitution, he had a tall, well-proportioned figure, perhaps too robust to be absolutely graceful, but his hands and feet might have served as models for a sculptor. A clear and ruddy complexion, with small lively deep blue eyes, and chesnut hair that lightly covered a forehead expressive of strong intellectual power, gave him a comeliness which is not exaggerated in his picture by Hoppner. He looked thoroughly the young English country gentleman.

On his return home he was placed, not as might be expected in the House of Commons, but in his father's brewery—the old man, with a Dissenter's feeling of independence, regarding the management of this great concern as a more useful and honourable pursuit, than any share in —what appeared to him—the selfish squabbles of politicians. In preparing himself, however, for his trade, Mr. Whitbread became in some degree unfitted for the higher walk of life he afterwards trod, and this sacrifice of some of his most valuable years alone prevented his becoming a great statesman. So completely did he devote himself to business, that he quite gave up reading, at the very time that it would have been most useful to him, which explains his

* Mr. Whitbread complained of Mr. Coxe as obsequious to the great, and inattentive to the duties of a tutor.—AUTHOR.

afterwards appearing ill-informed in some of the branches of knowledge most necessary to a public man—not that he yet entertained any idea of public life. In 1789 he married Miss Elizabeth Grey, eldest daughter of Sir Charles (afterwards Earl) Grey, a beautiful and accomplished woman, and settled on his father's Hertfordshire property. He was often seen walking by her side, as she rode her pony through the leafy lanes in the neighbourhood of Bedwell, much too devoted and happy a husband to be, apparently, in any danger of yielding to the attractions of politics.

In spite of these appearances, his marriage probably led to his becoming a politician. It strengthened his friendship with his brother-in-law, Mr. Grey; and when the latter became the Liberal candidate for Northumberland in the general election of 1790, Mr. Whitbread listened with complacency to a proposal that he should stand on the same interest for Bedford. A deputation from that borough found him at Southill on a visit to his father, who at first strongly objected. A discussion of two hours in the garden shook the old man's resolution, and his consent was slowly and reluctantly, though absolutely given, only, however, to be withdrawn a few minutes afterwards; but his son had in the interval left the house with the deputation, taking the precaution of locking the garden door, so that before any communication from home could reach him, he was already addressing the electors at Bedford, and had virtually secured his return.

The new Parliament opened (in November 1790) with a succession of party-fights on the recent disputes with Spain, arising out of the miserable question of Nootka Sound. The supineness, not unjustly charged against the Foreign Office on this occasion, which had brought the country to the very verge of war, and caused the waste of three millions of money in military preparations, supplied Mr. Whitbread with materials for his maiden speech; but with the danger, the interest of the question had passed away, and the speech so far failed as to be only remembered from his subsequent success. Not discouraged, he took a pro-

minent part in the debates shortly afterwards, on the proposed appropriation of the unclaimed dividends to the service of the year, a measure which the city capitalists, little prescient of the evils in store for them, regarded as actual spoliation, and vigorously opposed. He endeavoured to show the reasonableness of their fears in a clear and sensible argument, of which his observations on the danger of tampering with the public credit are the most entitled to attention. Like the other speakers, he overlooked the awkward fact that it was the Bank as the depositary of the dividend, and not the public creditor, whose interests were most involved in the question; but he was sufficiently wise for his generation, as he elicited the warm commendations of Fox, Sheridan, and Windham, and even of Burke, not to mention Belsham, a friend and fellow-townsman, who, more fondly than wisely, thought to give him a niche in the Temple of Fame by a florid description of his merits. [History of England, v. 4, p. 374.] Cheered by this success, he made a bolder essay (on the 12th of April), in some lengthened strictures, apparently unpremeditated, on a speech of Lord Belgrave's. This nobleman having claimed a generous confidence in Ministers as essential to the public safety, Mr. Whitbread jumped up, and denying the title of the Ministers to such a privilege, took an indignant survey of their measures with a flow of language and felicity of expression which he seldom afterwards surpassed.

The Whigs saw at once the value of so promising a recruit, and he descended from the obscurity of the back benches to the neighbourhood of the Opposition chiefs. They also speedily entrusted to him one of those motions on the Russian armament, which were at the time their more formidable weapons against the Government. The speech he delivered on this occasion was (Lord Brougham tells me) a very good one; but if it satisfied his friends it could not have satisfied himself, for it was almost immediately forgotten in the general admiration excited by the maiden speech of Mr. Jenkinson on the

opposite side. He thus had the mortification of seeing a new member, a younger man, decidedly the hero of the night. Even Sir Philip Francis, a hot partisan, admitted the Ministerial triumph, observing, however, with reference to the weakness of the case, "Jenkinson has made Valenciennes lace out of coarse twist." Not that Mr. Jenkinson realised the expectations of his admirers, it being soon perceived that it required long preparation for him to speak with any effect; and in the brilliant career he afterwards ran as Lord Hawkesbury and Lord Liverpool, he never acquired any reputation as a debater.

Mr. Whitbread's success in the House of Commons cannot be traced to any particular speech, and was of no rapid growth. Several of his contemporaries spoke better than he did: none could speak on the same variety of subjects so well. He quickly identified himself with the great questions of negro emancipation, education, and the extension of civil and religious rights; and whatever might be the superior eloquence of other advocates of the same principles, it often failed to produce the impression that almost invariably followed his forcible though less refined appeals.

Men of the middle class like him, who persevered in addressing the House, and trying to take a leading part in it against persons of greater family pretensions than themselves, were pretty sure to be men of more than usual audacity. Without that quality they would never have surmounted the opposition made to them, and it may well be believed they had it to a displeasing excess.* He thus gave publicity to many painful truths respecting the wants and wishes of the lower and middle orders, which few members of the aristocracy knew, and fewer liked to be known. In a practical acquaintance with common things, and in the ready application of it, he had no superior in the House.

* See Mr. Grote's finely drawn character of Cleon.—History of Greece, v. i. 337.—AUTHOR.

At the preliminary meeting for the formation of the Coalition Ministry, Mr. Fox, in his familiar way, said to Mr. Grey, "What office is Sam to have?" Mr. Grey answered, "I know that he will accept none. It is out of the question." Whereupon none was offered; but on hearing of the conversation, Mr. Whitbread took great offence at Mr. Grey speaking thus authoritatively without consulting him. A peerage was then offered him on condition of his quitting the brewery. This made him still more angry, and he declined it without hesitation. Some coolness followed between him and Mr. Grey, which was I fear not removed by Mr. Ponsonby (the brother of Mrs. Grey,) being chosen as leader of the Opposition—a post which had great attractions for him. No blame, however, can, I believe, fairly be imputed to Mr. Grey on either occasion. Mr. Whitbread's expressions had invariably been such as to lead others to suppose that office would be odious to him; and as to the leadership, it is very doubtful whether even the influence of Mr. Grey could have secured his election. He was disliked and feared by the Grenvillites, and by no means a favourite with the Whigs, who thought his manner arrogant and imperious. He is the only eminent Liberal whom Lord Holland, himself one of the most amiable of men, mentioned to me with harshness.

His passion for business was as remarkable in private as in public life. When in the country, he might be found at every public meeting: Bible Societies, Hospitals, Lunatic Asylums, all acknowledged him as one of their most active and useful supporters. He was the first to introduce into Parliament a Bill for Agricultural Savings' Banks; and with more benevolence than sagacity he tried to establish a minimum of wages for agricultural labour; but he was no political economist.

His best speeches (Lord Brougham tells me), were after his separation from the Whigs; and his influence so far increased, that he was to have been one of the Secretaries of State, had the Ministry been formed on the accession of the Prince to the Regency. It was mainly through his

generous and determined opposition, that Saxony was not annexed to Prussia by the Holy Alliance.

He left two sons and two daughters. Of the latter, one married Admiral (afterwards Earl) Waldegrave; the younger daughter was the wife of Viscount Eversley, and I owe to her friendship some of these particulars. Both inherited much of their father's ability, and were deservedly respected.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XI.

RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY DUTIES. — INSOLVENT DEBTORS' BILL.—LOCAL COURTS BILL.

1818–19. Æt. 36-37.

Lord Althorp re-elected for Northamptonshire.

Lord Althorp was re-elected for Northamptonshire, in the new Parliament, without opposition. Indeed, besides the strength of his local connections, he was so generally respected, that any proposal for disputing his seat at such a moment would have been received with indignation by the great body of his political opponents.* Touched by this proof of sympathy in his constituents, he exerted himself to do his duty to them by attending the House at the opening of the Session. Accordingly he returned to London early in January, but not to his once happy home. He had broken up his establishment in Pall Mall, and never could be induced to have another. The entreaties of his mother fixed him for a time at Spencer House. Lady Lyttelton saw him on his arrival, and was shocked at his altered looks and extreme dejection. The command over his feelings, which he attained when living alone at Wiseton, gave way on a renewal of intercourse with his family. He

* This was the observation made to me by a member of the leading family in the opposite interest.—Author.

1819. Æt. 37.

frequently retired to his room to sit in gloomy abstraction, and brood over his loss. At times, however, as the object of his coming to London recurred to him, he would speak with some interest on politics, which encouraged the hope that this might be the means of rousing him from the melancholy condition into which he had fallen.

It soon proved, however, that the tone of his mind had been brought too low to relish the asperities of party warfare. With an aching heart, and feelings akin to indifference towards the course of events, he could no longer share the excitement which animated his political associates. Even their conversation wearied him. In compliance with their wishes, he brought forward a question of Privilege,* but the effort cost him too much to be for some time repeated. Fortunately, he felt less repugnance to Committee business, and consented to serve on an inquiry into the working of the Insolvent Debtors' Act, a subject in itself dry and unattractive, but involving questions in the relation of debtor and creditor, which he had long regarded with interest, as bearing essentially on the condition of the middle and lower classes.

Insolvent Debtors' Bill.

The Insolvent Act had been intended as a correction of the law of imprisonment for debt; but from its imperfect machinery had become a mere cloak for improvidence and fraud. Out of fourteen millions of debt which had come under its operation in six years, the average amount of dividend did

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., v. xxxix., p. 1167.

not exceed half a farthing in the pound—a vast sacrifice of property, considering that the more industrial classes, such as artisans, tradesmen, and small manufacturers, and not the great merchants or capitalists, were generally the sufferers. Still the Act found favour, not only with the classes that availed themselves of it, but even with philanthropists and law-reformers—all being united against the law of imprisonment for debt—and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so beset by conflicting deputations, that he frankly confessed himself unable to deal with the question, saying that next to the Poor Law, he had found no subject equally embarrassing.* 1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

The Attorney-General (Sir William Garrow) had undertaken the charge of the Committee, but after a few sittings he relinquished it to Lord Althorp, who usually took the chair, arranged the course of proceedings, examined the witnesses, and finally drew up the report, as the groundwork of a Bill. When the draft was submitted to the Committee for approval, they opposed it, as giving a penal character to insolvency; nor did Lord Althorp deny this to be, in some degree, his intention. Humanity, not less than justice, he insisted, called for the infliction of punishment in cases where misconduct, and not misfortune, had originated the debt; and it would be found too often that the creditor, and not the debtor, was the victim really to be pitied. He proposed to substitute for the existing miserable and

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., v. xl., p. 590.

1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

inefficient jurisdiction in insolvency, an efficient Court of three judges, with definite powers over the person and property of insolvents, which would award punishment or relief, as justice in each case might require. He had to fight the battle against a large majority of the Committee, and in the end his views were but partially adopted, as he afterwards more than once complained in the House; and he particularly instanced, that the confinement of a fraudulent debtor was not made long enough, and that more time should have been given to the creditors to object to the discharge of the insolvent.*

Passes the Commons.

Lord Althorp prepared a Bill in conformity with the report, and found no difficulty, with the support of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in carrying it through the House. Some carping remarks were made upon it by Mr. Courtenay (afterwards Earl of Devon) on behalf of the Commissioners of Bankruptcy, who were jealous of any interference with this branch of the law, and a law reformer or two solemnly protested against the injustice of imprisonment for debt. On the other hand, several members of the Committee, especially Mr. Littleton (since Lord Hatherton), a political opponent, warmly testified to the value of his services in the chair, saying "that they had been the subject of praise in every circle where he had heard the question alluded to." Moreover, he had the satisfaction of finding the

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., S. S., v. viii., p. 610.

House attentive to his speech explanatory of the Bill, though it was so long as to fill three pages of Hansard.* 1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

The Bill met with rough treatment in the Lords. The principle was not disapproved; but a clause subjecting the real property of insolvents to the payment of their debts was treated as a dangerous innovation, taking away one of the few feudal privileges that remained to the landed aristocracy. Lord Tankerville, a Liberal peer, told me that he had opposed it solely on this ground; and Lord Eldon (the Lord Chancellor), in utter violation of a pledge given by the Government in the House of Commons, countenanced the opposition. The Bill was of course lost;—but the Government made the only amends in their power to Lord Althorp, by at once dismissing the officers of the Insolvent Court, which virtually suspended the operation of the law until the new Act could be passed. Thrown out in the Lords.

Early in the following Session, the Ministers adopted Lord Althorp's Bill with some modifications of the obnoxious clause, and filled up the new appointments with men highly qualified for their duties. The new Court would have proved more efficient had it been armed with the powers given in the report; but in spite of these deficiencies it has been productive of great public benefit; and the necessity of such a jurisdiction as was contended for by Lord Althorp, in opposition both to the prejudices of the day, and the conviction of many en-

* Hansard's Parl. Deb. v. xl., p. 587.

1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

lightened lawyers, is now universally admitted. Indeed, the only material improvements made in the Bill by later legislation have been in increased severity towards the insolvent, whilst the provisions framed by Lord Althorp are all virtually embodied in the existing law. These improvements, however, are trifling compared with the moral effect resulting from the establishment of the Court, the publicity of its proceedings having, by an exposure of individual cases, drawn the public feeling on such subjects into a right channel, and operated as a powerful preventive to the spread of a disgraceful system.*

It was in the attention required for preparing and passing the Insolvent Bill, that Lord Althorp first began to reconcile himself to his altered position. The labour of the preliminary inquiry, his necessary intercourse with the witnesses, his discussions with his colleagues, besides the long and frequent sittings of the Committee, refreshed instead of wearying him; and the edge of his grief was in some degree dulled by the efforts he made in discharge of what he conceived to be his duty. He thought that if he could only combine hard work with retirement, he might succeed in bearing the burden of life with tolerable cheerfulness. Accordingly, at the end of the Session, he quitted Spencer House, and again took chambers in the Albany, where for the next ten years he led a life of uniform seclusion, maintaining a mere bachelor's establishment, and admit-

Lord Althorp takes chambers in the Albany.

* The value of the Court has, at the time I write these words, been proved by a successful experience of forty years.—AUTHOR.

ting only old friends and near relations. Few of these, however, could prevail on him to come to their houses. 1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

Solitude had never been distasteful,—now it was a relief to him. The absence of all moroseness or selfishness in his sorrow, and the honest unostentatious efforts he made to control his emotions, were at times very touching. A desire of employing himself usefully to the public became his ruling sentiment. He entered heartily into the business of the House, and except the Speaker and Clerks at the table, few surpassed him in the regularity of his attendance. The subjects of debate that interested him he studied with a sort of feverish industry—perhaps he attended to little else—but these involved inquiries into political economy, statistics, and law, as well as, though in a less degree, into history and science. Political economy, which, like most politicians, he had previously neglected, now became one of his favourite studies, and he attained considerable proficiency in it. He never complained of a book as dry. Even statistical tables, when they involved any question of principle, would fix his attention for hours. He seemed to find in them all the charms of a mathematical problem. I am not aware of the extent of his constitutional knowledge, but I recollect his descanting on the value of the "Parliamentary Debates," as a key to a correct knowledge of English history; and he was, I believe, one of the few statesmen who had the patience to travel through this voluminous collection. He

His diligence in attending the House.

1819-25. Æt. 37-43. worked still harder at Wiseton than in London, as for some years he rarely had any guests. He was not a quick reader, for he would often lay down his book to think over it; and if there was little system in his studies, there was much method in his mind*: —indeed, he had the faculty of reflection stronger than that of observation, or the extent of his knowledge would have been more generally appreciated. With his time thus regularly occupied, for unemployed leisure was no indulgence to him, he undesignedly qualified himself for the leading part he afterwards took in the councils of the Liberals.

His thoughts at this time turned much upon law, with some branches of which he was already well acquainted by his experience at Sessions, where he occasionally displayed a degree of knowledge, that equally assisted the Bench and puzzled the Bar. Proper encouragement might have induced him to undertake the amendment of the Game Laws, on the impolicy of which he entertained a strong opinion; but besides the peculiar difficulty of the task, he saw from the neglect that attended the efforts of such great men as Romilly and Mackintosh, that he must expect little sympathy or support from his political friends on any question of law reform, it being a topic of no party interest, and leading to no political results.

Brings forward Bill for recovery

So little did he regard such considerations, that, as soon as his Insolvent Act was carried, he gave

* I never knew a man who (to use an expression of Lord Brougham) had less cotton in his head.—AUTHOR.

notice of another measure of a similar character, involving the relation of debtor and creditor; but from its interference with the administration of justice, likely to encounter a very serious opposition. This was a Bill for the more cheap and speedy recovery of small debts by the establishment of Local Courts. Nothing shows more forcibly the indifference of the public to law reform than that such a measure should have been so long delayed,—and at last only taken up by a member unconnected with the legal profession.

1819–25. Æt. 37–43. of small debts.

It was an undeniable fact that, to recover a debt of 6*l.* or 7*l.*, a man must begin by expending 60*l.* or 70*l.*, when, at the very outset, to use a common expression, he had to run the risk of throwing so much good money after bad, and his subsequent expenses were often so great as to make him no gainer if he succeeded.* Then the technicalities of the law could render success fruitless by the difficulties they interposed between judgment and execution; and should all these difficulties be overcome, the creditor often had the mortification of finding that the law had suffered an unprincipled adversary to place his property out of the jurisdiction of the Court.

It had become notorious that no prudent man would think of enforcing a debt under 15*l.* by going to law; and the result of this was to cause the tradesmen to enter into combinations not to sell on credit to their poorer customers, which

* Lord Brougham's Speeches, v. ii., 490.

1819-25. led to great distress in some of the manufacturing
Æt. 37-43. districts.

Lord Althorp proposed to remedy these evils by adapting the Sheriff's Court (once an important tribunal) to the increased exigencies of the times. In every county the sheriff was to appoint a judge, with a competent salary to be paid out of the rate, the proceedings before whom were to be conducted at a very low expense—counsel not being allowed, and even attorneys being restricted in addressing the court to questions of law. For all the complicated machinery of pleas, was substituted a simple plaint of a few lines. The dispatch of business was facilitated by the judge going four circuits in the year, and by other provisions especially aiming at the removal of the ordinary causes of delay and expense in the higher tribunals.

A serious error, however, was committed in leaving the suits to be tried by a jury, the cost of which could not be otherwise than heavy; but any attempt to dispense with trial by jury, in a question of fact, would certainly at this time not have been tolerated.

Lord Althorp satisfied himself in the first instance, with an explanation of the leading features of his Bill, observing that he wished the measure to come before the country in order to be considered during the Recess, and discussed in the following Session. This, however, did not save him from the animadversions of the Attorney-General, who denounced the plan as creating a costly and most unnecessary jurisdiction.

1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

The disturbed state of the country during the Recess and the Session, succeeded by the Corn Law agitation, occupied the public mind; and the question of local courts met with such chilling neglect, that Lord Althorp prudently abstained from reviving it in the Session of 1822, but he tried the pulse of the House again in 1823, having improved his measure in the interval by vesting the patronage of the judges in the Lords Lieutenant of counties, and allowing no actions for debts of more than two years' date. He also fixed the amount of debt recoverable at 10*l*. Even these amendments failed to make any favourable impression, and Lord Althorp yielded to the wishes of his friends by withdrawing the Bill, only, however, to bring forward an improved edition in the following Session. One important provision of the new Bill was a clause allowing the plaintiffs and defendants in any suit to give evidence. Out of respect to his personal character, rather than in acknowledgment of the merits of his Bill, the latter was referred to a Select Committee. There the good sense, good humour, and perfect knowledge of the subject which Lord Althorp could display, had a free scope, such as his modesty often denied him in the House. He succeeded on all the points on which he laid much stress; and when he brought up the report, made a sensible speech in support of his views. The discussion was renewed on the Third Reading, and presented a singular scene. The Ministers gave no opinion on the measure, and asked for a large compensation clause; but the anger

1819-25. Æt. 37-43.

of the lawyers, which had slumbered in the earlier stages of the Bill, exploded in violent denunciations against it. Two of the most eminent members of the Bar (I blush to say they were Whigs) described the practice of examining parties in their own causes "as most abhorrent to the spirit of English law, and as an actual bounty upon perjury;" while Mr. John Williams went so far as to say that one-half of the Bar were already supposed to hold Government appointments, and should this be true, it would be ridiculous with this fresh bait to look any longer for independence in the profession. The latter argument seems to have weighed on the Whigs, with whom the extension of the influence of the Crown had been during the last half century a constant theme of invective. Lord Althorp treated it as, in this instance, an imaginary evil, and he so far prevailed as to carry the Third Reading of his Bill,—clogged, however, with a threat of the Attorney-General, (upon the refusal of a compensation clause), to have his revenge in the Lords.

Lord Redesdale, a judge second only to Lord Eldon in experience and knowledge, generously gave the Bill his sanction, by moving the Second Reading in the Lords; and a debate ensued which is worth noticing, if merely to show the advance of enlightened views on legal reform in later years. What would now be thought of a Lord Chief Justice, a Whig, and a man of such acknowledged attainments as Lord Ellenborough, saying, "If it were attainable to enable a creditor to recover small debts, at a little

cost, it would not be desirable. Such a law would only make tradesmen lax in giving credit, and the poor ready to take it, and thereby occasion a great deal of mischief to both. To give facility to recover debts would enable a creditor to make debtors pay more than they owed, and frequently to force others to pay what they did not owe." His Lordship also ridiculed the locomotive functions of the judges. He insisted that these gentlemen would be always on horseback, and no respectable member of the Bar would accept such an office.

The Bill withdrawn.

As it appeared that the Ministry were inexorable as to the necessity of a compensation clause, the Bill was withdrawn.

Lord Althorp felt this defeat less keenly, because he inferred from the language of his opponents that, by yielding on the subject of compensation to the Tories, and of patronage to the Whigs, the opposition might be overcome. Accordingly, in 1825, he brought forward a fourth Bill with these amendments, vesting the jurisdiction in the Insolvent Court, which was to have four additional judges for that purpose. To his great mortification, he found himself in a worse predicament than ever. The Whig lawyers, though partially silenced, were not propitiated, whilst the members really interested in the measure represented that to encumber the Insolvent Court with functions so far beyond its strength, could only result in the utter failure of the new jurisdiction, besides bringing discredit on the Court itself—an argument which Lord Althorp felt to be

1819–25. Æt. 37–43.

unanswerable, and he proceeded no further with the Bill.

These abortive efforts to promote a great public good had not, however, been made in vain. It is true that he met with little encouragement to revive his Bill in the ensuing Session; but, what was far better, he had made a convert of Mr. Peel, whom he found ready to take up the question and bring it before Parliament as a Government measure. This was prevented by the change of Ministry on the retirement of Lord Liverpool; but, a few weeks after this event, Mr. Peel, in fulfilment of his promise, introduced, as a private member, a Bill for the Recovery of Small Debts, agreeing in principle and in many of its provisions with Lord Althorp's, which met with a most favourable reception—Lord Althorp warmly supporting it.

Thus the connection of the latter with this great measure was soon forgotten, his name not being even mentioned in the subsequent debates on the question of Local Courts; and it has been reserved for these pages to put on record the words of Mr. Peel, "that the subject was originally undertaken by Lord Althorp. It was at his instance that a committee was appointed—through his perseverance that those inquiries were instituted that established the fact, not very creditable to the law of England—that there exists no remedy of which a prudent man can avail himself for the recovery of small debts."* If he failed to break down this

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. xvii., p. 1351.

monstrous injustice, so did Mr. Peel, whose Bill was eventually dropped. Even Lord Brougham, with his great eloquence and capacity for legal reform, long struggled in vain in the same course; nor was it until a quarter of a century had passed away, that such an Act as Lord Althorp had contemplated became the law of the land.* 1819–25. Æt. 37-43.

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Like Bentham, Lord Althorp was in legal reform far in advance of his age, yet time has proved the value of the measures advocated by him; being chairman of Quarter Sessions he was probably well acquainted with the law of evidence, though as a layman he could have had but little knowledge of the technical rules of law. It is curious now to reflect, that, with the full concurrence of the more enlightened portion of the profession, Local Courts with a very extended jurisdiction have been established, and parties to the suit also have long been capable of giving evidence; whilst by the passing of the Judicature Act a simple statement of the cause of action and the defence has swept away all the intricate system of pleading.—EDITOR.

* Not only the attorneys, especially in the provinces, but most of the leading members of the Bar were decidedly opposed to the introduction of Local Courts. I once heard Sir Edward Sugden indulge his satirical vein at the expense of the measure, in a speech before the Lord Chancellor, when he sneered "at the cheap shops soon to be opened throughout the country for the administration of bad justice." Mr. Brougham was a solitary instance of superiority to the prejudices of his profession.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XII.

DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER.—PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.—ACCESSION OF GEORGE THE FOURTH.—CORN LAW DEBATES.

1819. Æt. 37.

Lord Althorp was thus usefully occupied when an event occurred that plunged him again into the whirlpool of politics.

Disturbances at Manchester.

On the 16th of August, during the Recess, a great meeting of the working classes was held at Manchester, by public notice, for the purpose of choosing a legislatorial Attorney and Representative, as had before been done at Birmingham; Henry Hunt, afterwards member for Preston, being the leader of the movement. He was a small landed proprietor in Somersetshire, of broken fortune and profligate habits, ill informed, but clever and resolute, with a fine person, and (when he pleased) rather prepossessing manners; so that altogether he was able to gain an ascendency in the disaffected districts, greater than any man of the day. The turbulent demeanour of the crowd, their caps of liberty and banners with democratic inscriptions, and, above all, their numbers, which seem to have exceeded 50,000, alarmed the magistrates, and

before any act of violence had been committed, the yeomanry in attendance received orders to charge, when nearly 100 persons were killed and wounded. The meeting immediately dispersed; and the ring-leaders suffered themselves to be apprehended without making any resistance. 1819. Æt. 37.

Such a catastrophe naturally caused deep resentment among the working classes in all the large towns, as was shown in the usual manner by stormy meetings and furious Resolutions. What was still more alarming, a panic at the same time seized the higher classes, so little justified by the occasion as almost to cast a stain on the national character. That distress, and its natural accompaniment, discontent, prevailed to a serious extent among the lower orders, was unfortunately beyond dispute. Their secret associations and their nightly drillings, though the latter do not appear to have been common, called for increased vigilance in the police. Such monster meetings as had been held in the large towns, certainly endangered both life and property in the neighbourhood; and the controlling power ought, in these emergencies, to have been lodged in more effective hands than the local magistracy, whose difficulties were aggravated by the indistinctness and obscurity of the law. But the existence of a vast conspiracy, embracing the chief manufacturing towns, with armies of Radicals prepared to march from different and distant points upon London to establish a Republic—as if a multitude of mere artisans, without military officers, and

1819. Æt. 37.

generally without arms, having no bond of union beyond the blind impulse of passion, would even accomplish one day's march, much less face the first regiment of regular infantry they might meet on their route—could only be credited by men, who were governed more by their fears than their reason. Such, however, was the firm conviction of the large majority of the higher classes, with little distinction of politics; and all looked anxiously to the Government for protection.

Thus encouraged, the Ministers grasped the reins of power with a still tighter hand. They immediately called Parliament together; they represented the country as on the verge of revolution; and not content with approving the conduct of the Manchester magistracy, they introduced, among other measures of coercion, an Act to put down all political meetings. The House was acquiescent, with few exceptions. Some men of strong nerves and warm popular attachments made a gallant though ineffectual stand for constitutional freedom. None took a more prominent part than Lord Althorp. It was to him that the Liberals entrusted the motion which threw on the Ministers the responsibility of refusing to produce the evidence on which their proceedings were founded. He made a manly and temperate speech, which was loudly cheered. Not that he escaped censure from many of his friends for expressions which implied a degree of sympathy with the complaints of the Radical agitators, if not a defence of their excesses.

Proceedings in Parliament.

But the inference was a strained one. In vindicating the just rights of the people, he had indeed claimed some indulgence for their errors, as he had all along opposed the policy of the Government, and predicted its fatal results. The prosperity and happiness of the country depended, in his opinion, on the solidity of its social system, and the union of sentiment as well as interest that linked the various branches together. A war of classes was more to be apprehended than the worst efforts of any Radical conspirators; and while he was ready to support Ministers in suppressing outrage and such practices as nightly drills, unimpeachable evidence of absolute necessity could alone induce him to surrender into their hands the most valuable privileges of the people. 1819-20. Æt. 37-38.

These sentiments will be honoured or condemned according to the political creed of the reader. Among the suffering classes, Lord Althorp's name obtained great consideration; and there is no doubt that his advocacy of their cause touched the hearts of many who were really not ill-disposed, and proportionably diminished the influence of their mischievous advisers.

The accession of George IV. was quickly followed by the Parliamentary proceedings against the Queen. The enthusiasm displayed by the Liberal party in her favour does not seem to have been shared by Lord Althorp. His support of the Queen, or rather his opposition to the King, did not extend beyond a silent vote. After the failure of the Bill in the Accession of Geo. IV.

1820–21. Æt. 38-39. Lords he was not backward in the public recognition of the Queen's legitimate rights; and accordingly he supported Lord Archibald Hamilton's motion (on the 26th of January, 1821) for restoring her name to the Liturgy, in common with Mr. Wilberforce, Sir Charles Wetherell, and other independent members, observing that united as the country evidently was on the expediency of this step, he thought the House could not resist so unanimous a declaration. The House, however, ashamed to reject the motion, which was almost a matter of course, and yet unwilling to inflict further mortification on the King, rather meanly avoided any decision by passing the previous question. The indignity was not very keenly felt by the Queen; she had by this time discovered her popularity to be on the wane, and warned by the deserted aspect of her little court,

Death of the Queen. was already preparing to leave England. She died before the motion could be renewed, lamented by few even of her partisans. What the King's feelings must have been at her death may be inferred from an anecdote which was often related by Sir William Knighton. He had received early tidings of the death of Napoleon, and hurrying to the King's bed-side, he exclaimed, "Sire, your greatest enemy is dead." The King abruptly interrupted him with the question, "When did *she* die?"

Revival of trade. The gradual revival of trade in the years of 1820 and 1821 restored prosperity to the manufacturing districts; and then,—as if to test the faith of political economists in their doctrine of the intimate

union between the commercial and the agricultural interests, loud cries were heard from almost every county in England of the distress of all classes depending upon land. The price of corn throughout Europe seems to have fallen at that time below the cost of production: in some parts of Germany, it was even below the cost of harvesting. In England large farms were thrown out of cultivation; and with almost one voice the members for rural districts declared in the House of Commons, that farming had become absolute ruin. 1821. Æt. 39.

Distress in the agricultural districts.

The Ministers, threatened with the defection of their supporters, were perplexed in the extreme. The monopoly of the home market had already been yielded to the landowners, at the risk of a revolution, by the Corn Law of 1814, and yet they still cried out "Give, give!" After some fruitless discussion it was determined to grant them a Committee to make out their case and to find a remedy. Lord Althorp was named on the Committee.*

Committee on the Corn Laws.

The proceedings of this Committee must have been full of instruction: witness after witness gave detailed, and often pathetic, testimony to the pressure of agricultural distress. The discussion of this evidence, the cross-examination and searching inquiry into facts, the constant controversy on all important points, going on between the representatives of the Protectionists, and the moderate party,

* The committee was moved for by Mr. Gooch on March 7th, 1821, "To consider petitions relating to the distress of the agricultural interest." (Hansard's Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. iv., p. 1139).—EDITOR.

1821-22. Æt. 39-40.

the latter being led by Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Ricardo, and Mr. Wolryche Whitmore, presented a remarkable display of ability and information, with more distinct and practical views on political economy than could then be found in books. No progress, however, could be made in discovering a remedy, where even the cause of the distress was to the last violently disputed. Unable to come to any resolution, worsted in argument, and yet determined not to yield, the Protectionists at length angrily ceased to attend, believing the Committee would thus be obliged to separate without making a report—a wretched policy, which only served most effectually to defeat its object, as it enabled Mr. Huskisson to obtain the authority of the Committee to a report of his own composition, containing a masterly refutation of the views in which the inquiry had originated,* and thus clearing the way for a more liberal system of legislation.

* This report may still be read with interest, and I venture to cite the following passage as a specimen of Mr. Huskisson's skill in reasoning and composition :—"Your Committee may entertain a doubt (a doubt, however, which they wish to state with that diffidence which a subject so extensive naturally imposes upon their judgment), whether the only solid foundation of the flourishing state of agriculture is not laid in abstaining as much as possible from interference, either by protection or prohibition, with the application of capital in any branch of industry? Whether all fears for the decline of agriculture, either from temporary vicissitudes, to which all speculations are liable, or from the extension of other pursuits of general industry, are not in a great degree imaginary? Whether commerce can expand, manufactures thrive, and great public works be undertaken, without furnishing to the skill and labour which the capital thus employed puts in motion, increased means of paying for the productions of the land? Whether the principal part of those productions which contribute to the gratification of the wants and desires of the different classes of the com-

Lord Althorp was the only member representing a large agricultural constituency, whose vote was given for this celebrated paper. 1821-22. Æt. 39-40.

The agitation, gathering strength during the Recess, was renewed with increased violence at the opening of the Session. The Report of the Committee was disclaimed by the seceding Protectionist members. They treated it as an absolute imposition, both on themselves and the country. As the only mode of appeasing them the Committee was revived, with full powers to make a fresh report, that might efface the erroneous impression of which they complained. As another peace-offering, Mr. Huskisson declined to act on the Committee, his place being taken by Lord Castlereagh. This Committee took no further evidence; its time was occupied in preparing a report—a task which it cost nearly six weeks to accomplish. Mr. Whitmore told me that their proceedings were conducted with much warmth and bad temper. It required all the tact and decision of Lord Castlereagh to maintain order amongst The Report.

munity must not necessarily be drawn from our own soil, the demand increasing with the population, as the population must increase with the riches of the country? Whether a great part of the same capital which is employed in supporting the industry connected with manufactures, commerce, and public works, does not, passing by a very rapid course into the hands of the occupier of the soil, serve also as a capital for the encouragement of agriculture? Whether in our own country in former times, and in other naturally fertile countries up to the present time, agriculture has not languished from the want of such a stimulus? And whether in those countries the proprietors of the land are not themselves poor, and the people wretched, in proportion as from want of capital their labour is more exclusively confined to raising from their own soil the means of their own scanty subsistence?"—AUTHOR.

1822. Æt. 40. them, and to the surprise of Mr. Whitmore, he manfully stood up for the Liberal principles enunciated by Mr. Huskisson, at the risk of offending some of his most zealous supporters. His exertions, coupled with his other duties—and, unfortunately, he was always obstinate in refusing assistance—strained his constitution fearfully, as was shown by his care-worn brow and increasing paleness: indeed, he seems to have then received his death-blow. Even his influence only succeeded in promoting a compromise, of which the most important feature, besides the grant of a Loan to the distressed districts, was the prohibition of the import of corn when under 70*s.* the quarter, and a graduated duty of 10*s.* to 15*s.* a quarter till prices rose to 80*s.*

Lord Althorp had little concern in the Second Report—not that his views of the Corn question were yet either very sound or distinct. He disapproved of the Corn Laws on principle:—he admitted that it was bad economy to grow corn at home when it could be procured cheaper from abroad;—and he agreed with Mr. Huskisson that it was by diminishing the cost of producing corn, and not by raising its price that the agriculturists could be effectually relieved. On the other hand, he ascribed the distress of the landed interest to the pressure of taxation, and he regarded a moderate duty on the importation of foreign corn, as a necessary security against the withdrawal of capital from agriculture, and worst of all, a famine in the event of war. Mr.

1822. Æt. 40.

Whitmore warned him in vain of the danger of encouraging the farmers to grow a sufficient quantity of corn for the whole supply of the country. He persisted in his views, and on the 21st of February, brought forward a plan for the Relief of the Nation, in which he explained at length how a reduction to the amount of two millions might be made in the Estimates, and that sum applied in diminishing taxation, as a panacea to the impoverished agriculturists.* Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Whitmore, and others of his colleagues in the Committee, resolutely opposed it, and the House wisely agreed with them.†

It is unnecessary to pursue the subject further than to state that Lord Londonderry‡ reluctantly acted on the Report of the Committee;§ and the sliding-scale, for so many years the object of complaint and derision, was thus inflicted on the country. So all that the Ministers could offer in the way of relief dwindled into a State loan, in which no one would share, and an additional monopoly, which proved comparatively valueless.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb. Sec. Ser., v. vi., p. 557.

† There is a very able article (published contemporaneously with the debate) in the *Edinburgh Review*, v. xxxvi., p. 452, probably from the pen of Mr. McCulloch, strongly advocating freedom of trade in corn, and equally disapproving of any duty on its importation.—EDITOR.

‡ Lord Castlereagh had succeeded to his father's title during the summer of the preceding year.—EDITOR.

§ This Report is a very poor performance, and has little to recommend it either in argument or suggestion. One or two passages countenancing parts of Mr. Huskisson's Report, are introduced, I suspect, at the instance of Lord Londonderry.—AUTHOR.

1822. Æt. 40.

Prorogation of Parliament.

With this unsatisfactory settlement of the question, the business of the Session virtually closed, little else having been accomplished afterwards. The Government hurried on the Prorogation, which took place on the 6th of August.

Shortly before that time Lord Londonderry had committed suicide.

## CHAPTER XIII.

MR. CANNING.—HIS POLICY.—DISTRUSTED BY LORD ALTHORP.—DEBATES ON SPAIN AND ON IRELAND.—MR. HUSKISSON'S TRADE REFORMS.—LORD ALTHORP'S POSITION.—LORD LIVERPOOL'S ILLNESS.—CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT.—LORD ALTHORP IN OFFICE.

1822. Æt. 40.

Mr. Canning.

THE substitution of Mr. Canning for Lord Londonderry, much as they had formerly opposed each other, was not viewed by the public as altering the policy of the Cabinet. With more Liberal impulses than some of his colleagues, Mr. Canning had yet not less zealously supported a succession of Tory Administrations; and his previous resignations were prompted by personal feeling rather than political principle. Exclusion from office, accompanied by repeated disappointments, and the dispersion of his Parliamentary followers, were believed to have subdued his tendency to intrigue, whilst the declining health of Lord Liverpool held out to him an additional motive for maintaining the system, on which his long-cherished hope of becoming First Minister seemed mainly to depend.*

* These are the grounds on which the Lord Chancellor, Lord Bathurst, and other members of the Cabinet, consented to Mr.

1823. Æt. 41. Parliament met in February (1823), by which time the introduction of Mr. Robinson and Mr. Huskisson into the Cabinet, the one as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the other as President of the Board of Trade, both appointments being ascribed to Mr. Canning's influence, greatly improved his position. It soon became evident that, although he had succeeded to the office, he did not propose to tread in the steps, of his predecessor. The administration both of the finances and the trade of the country, displayed a bold and enlightened spirit more in unison with the progress of the age than with the principles of the Tory party. The Foreign Office underwent a still more striking change. What part Mr. Canning had absolutely taken on the occasion of the French invasion of Spain was imperfectly known. That he had strongly condemned, and wished to make it a casus belli, was the general belief:—the blame attached to the policy of the Government being thrown on the more Tory section of the Cabinet. His speeches, and still more his despatches, from that date, indicate almost a resentful feeling towards France, which vented itself at length in a tone of expostulation, if not of rebuke, long unknown in the records of the Foreign Office. When the South American States had thrown off the yoke of Spain, and the Continental Sovereigns

His policy.

Canning's appointment. Lord Liverpool did not possess sufficient influence over his colleagues to have prevailed on them to make any concessions to Mr. Canning. This I know from unexceptionable authority.—AUTHOR.

looked sullenly on, afraid to sanction any revolt against established authority, he it was who took on himself the responsibility of carrying through a Tory Cabinet the national recognition of their independence; and he gloried in the act, ostentatiously proclaiming it as his own. Several members of the Cabinet, and a large body of the Ministerial supporters, remonstrated with Lord Liverpool on the latitude thus allowed him, insisting that he was evidently making advances to the Opposition, on whom, indeed, not only his liberal professions, but his engaging manners, produced no slight impression. He was especially popular with the independent and younger members. If any of the latter made a clever speech, he was among the first to offer congratulations and encouragement, and even advice. Many would gladly have seized any honourable pretext for joining him, and were constantly expressing their belief that, if met with generosity and due consideration, he would throw himself at once into the arms of the Whigs. 1823. Æt. 41.

Distrusted by Lord Althorp.

Lord Althorp witnessed this rising opinion among his friends with much concern. Like most Liberals of middle age, he had a strong aversion to Mr. Canning. Himself a man of scrupulous integrity, with a high standard of personal honour, he put a very harsh construction on the conduct of the latter, both towards Lord Sidmouth and Lord Londonderry. He knew the distrust entertained of him by some of the most eminent and estimable of the Tories; and he believed him incapable of any per-

1823. Æt. 41.

sonal sacrifice from patriotic motives. "If Canning," he used to say, "really thinks with us, why does he not resign? Catholic Emancipation could then be no longer resisted, and other great reforms would inevitably follow. I suspect that he courts us merely for our votes, and, as soon as he can do without them, he will fall back again on the Tories, and leave us only the shame of having been his dupes."

There is reason to believe that Mr. Canning's feelings towards the Whigs were of a mixed character. When he accepted the post of Governor-General of India, he told an old friend (Lord Holland) that he did so because he felt that Catholic Emancipation and other great Whig measures, even Parliamentary Reform, *must* be carried before his return, though only after a struggle, which might break up both the Whig and Tory parties, and the field would then be left open to him under advantages such as he had never enjoyed. Should, however, the settlement of Parliamentary Reform fall upon him, he would give the Radicals a dose too strong for their stomachs.* Thus regarding an escape from these reforms as hopeless, he desired so to steer his course that they should not drive him from power. He was prepared to carry them himself. Far from feeling any partiality to the Whigs, it was only to supply the defection of the Tories that he availed himself of their support; indeed he once ominously observed, "Our banners may be mingled

* This anecdote was related to me by Lord Holland many years ago.—AUTHOR.

for a time, but soon we must stand on adverse sides." 1823–24. Æt. 41-42.

Debates on Spain and on Ireland.

The Spanish question threatened a sudden rupture of the amicable relations of Mr. Canning with the Whigs, some of whom, especially Lord Folkestone, Lord Althorp, Lord John Russell, and Mr. James Macdonald, considered that the Ministers had withheld even a moral support from the Constitutional party in Spain. Indeed the patriot exiles,* on their arrival in England, charged the British Ambassador at Madrid with countenancing the intrigues of the extreme party against the Government, to the serious prejudice of the Liberal cause. Lord John Russell, in consequence, moved certain Resolutions in the House, condemnatory of the Government, when Lord Althorp made a strong, though, as Mr. Canning admitted, a temperate speech. Lord Folkestone and Lord Nugent were not so judicious, and the result was to give Mr. Canning scope for a display of wit and sarcasm against the latter, which almost convulsed the House with laughter, and obtained a triumphant division. Fearful of the encouragement that would be given to the Absolute Powers by a very large majority in his favour, Mr. Canning actually prevailed on some of his Whig acquaintances, whom he saw quitting the House in disgust, to remain and vote against him.†

* Senhor Arguellas repeatedly assured me of this, and he held the same language at Holland House.—AUTHOR.

† *Ex rel.* Lord Portman (then M.P. for Dorset) who was present.—AUTHOR.

1824. Æt. 42.

Towards the end of the Session,* Lord Althorp moved for a Committee on the state of Ireland, in a speech which Lord Stanley emphatically described as that "of a statesman;"—one more free from party-spirit, or more calculated to promote wise legislation for that unfortunate country, it would be difficult to find in the long series of Irish debates. It was but feebly answered by Mr. Canning, who for once so far lost his temper as to complain of the appeal made to him personally by Lord Althorp for his assistance to pass the Catholic question, treating it as an attempt to bring him over to the Whigs, a construction which Lord Althorp's words, and well known sentiments, sufficiently repudiated.

Mr. Huskisson's policy.

The confidence which Lord Althorp withheld from Mr. Canning he gave almost unreservedly to Mr. Huskisson, whom he esteemed a very able and honest financier. It had long been a maxim with him, that questions of trade ought not to be made party-questions; and he told me that this was the principle on which he should always act with respect to the Corn Laws. He thoroughly approved of Mr. Huskisson's commercial reforms, and, not content with supporting them in the House, he would canvass for votes among his political friends to counteract the opposition which he often saw gathering on the Ministerial benches;—and occasions were not rare when, without his persuasion and example, some sturdy Whigs of the old school might not have stepped forward, as they did, to save a Tory Government from defeat.

* Hansard, Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. ii., p. 654.

1824–26. Æt. 42-44.

Lord Althorp's position.

This assistance was more valuable, from the position he had now attained in the House. His deficiencies in some of the qualities which usually led to distinction in popular assemblies were overlooked, in the respect universally entertained for his character. The party had been almost without a leader since the retirement of Mr. Ponsonby. Mr. Brougham wanted influence, and Mr. Tierney* consideration, to fill the post effectively. Each had his admirers, but the opinion which carried most weight was Lord Althorp's. Whatever might be the eagerness shown to hear the speeches of Mr. Brougham and Mr. Tierney, it might be perceived at critical moments that many members waited anxiously to learn how Lord Althorp intended to vote, and were guided at once by the reply.

Lord Liverpool's illness.

Whilst the Tory party was thus torn by intestine divisions, it received an unexpected and most violent shock by the loss of Lord Liverpool. Whatever might have been his drawbacks, his cold and imperturbable temperament,† coupled as it was with great experience and no mean attainments, admirably qualified him for presiding over the councils of a divided Cabinet. With him expired all hope of maintaining the existing Government in office.

* Mr. Tierney had been elected Leader, and regularly installed as such at a large meeting of the party; but with all his talent and power of speaking, as well as his pleasant and prepossessing address, he never succeeded in acquiring the authority due to his position. Many would not forget his serving under Lord Sidmouth.—AUTHOR.

† This coldness was carried so far that he had no friends among his colleagues. They said that it was impossible to love a man so utterly without sympathy, even with his constant associates.—AUTHOR.

1824–26. Æt. 42-44.

Mr. Canning became Premier, and his appointment rekindled the long dormant ambition of the Whigs. It was obvious that without their support his Government would speedily be demolished by his former friends. A negotiation ensued; and offers were made on his part of a coalition, on the understanding that three of the leading Whigs should be admitted into the Cabinet; but that the great questions of Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Test Act, were still to remain in abeyance.

The Coalition.

The scheme originated with Mr. Brougham, and was eagerly taken up by a large section of the Opposition. It also caught the fancy of the more sanguine Liberals throughout the country, especially in the manufacturing towns. If considerations of personal friendship, or present ease, could have moved Lord Althorp, he would have supported it likewise; but he regarded his friends as under a delusion to which he would be no party. So strongly did he feel this, that only a few weeks before, when, immediately on Lord Liverpool's illness, the Tories were discussing among themselves how to reconstruct the Administration, he had proposed to Mr. Brougham to take an early opportunity of moving an Address to the Crown against any Ministry founded on a system of compromise*—believing it

* Roebuck's History of the Whig Ministry of 1830 (hereinafter referred to as "Roebuck's History"), v. i. p. 464 [App.] One scheme was to make Lord Bathurst Premier, not, however, as a King Log, whatever Mr. Roebuck may think. Sir Robert Peel used to say that

to be absurd in principle, and mischievous in effect. In this spirit he determined still to act. Accordingly he called a meeting at his rooms in the Albany, of the leading Whig members, who (Lord Milton and Lord Tavistock, amongst others, having attended) declared themselves decidedly of his opinion. Another meeting held at Burlington House in the following week, under the presidency of Lord George Cavendish, had a similar result, notwithstanding the adverse influence of the Duke of Devonshire, who came up to town from Chatsworth to support Mr. Brougham. Lord Althorp, on these and other occasions, insisted that the Whigs ought not to enter the Cabinet, unless in sufficient strength to influence its councils; and he viewed their abandonment of Catholic Emancipation, after having made it their chief ground of opposition to the late Ministers, as likely both to retard materially the passing of the measure, and to damage the character of the party. "What good," he asked, in his plain, practical way, "can the country derive from our accession to office, if we give up the measures which formed our best title to the public support? The result of these concessions will be a divided and

1826. Æt. 44.

he was one of the cleverest men in the party, and only wanted industry * to make a great statesman. His frankness, generosity, and high feeling of honour made him a great favourite with his colleagues. He was the grandson of Pope's Lord Bathurst, and had inherited many of the virtues and some of the defects of his ancestor.—AUTHOR.

* This is very questionable. Sir J. Stephen told me he was a very diligent man; see also his despatches preserved in the Wellington Papers.—LORD LYTTELTON.

1826. Æt. 44. do-nothing Government, followed very soon by, what I dread most of all, the dissolution of the party." He also deprecated the blind confidence claimed for Mr. Canning; and, adverting to some recent declaration made by the latter of unqualified hostility to Parliamentary Reform, he declared that this alone would prevent his crossing over to the Ministerial side.*

These views, of which the soundness was proved by the event, could only be met by an appeal to the difficulties of Mr. Canning's relations with the King, and the importance of breaking up the Tory party. The belief, however, that the Whigs would never have such a favourable opportunity of governing the country, presented still stronger arguments to a large section of politicians. The negotiations accordingly proceeded, and Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland, and Mr. Tierney agreed to enter the Cabinet, to secure the working of the new alliance. It afterwards transpired that Mr. Canning would have preferred Lord Althorp to Mr. Tierney, but had been overruled by the King.

A great meeting was held at Brooks's, at the instigation of Mr. Brougham, to ratify the treaty, and certain Resolutions in that sense were passed by acclamation; Sir Francis Burdett supporting them by an eloquent speech, in which he startled his audience by an elaborate argument against political consistency.†

* *Ex rel.* the Duke of Bedford, and other contemporaries.—AUTHOR.

† The history of the Coalition is still very imperfectly known, and

As Mr. Brougham was the author of the Coalition, so he was the person on whom it mainly, in the first instance, depended for success. He alone, of the whole Opposition, was held in some degree of awe by Mr. Canning. The late Rev. William Canning,* Canon of Windsor, told me, as far back as 1824, that Mr. Canning often dwelt, with (perhaps unwilling) admiration, on his extraordinary powers. Once, when Mr. Canning was preparing a speech on some great occasion, he desired his cousin to refer to a passage in Clarendon's History of the Rebellion, which he recollected as bearing on the question at issue. It proved to be strikingly applicable: but a few lines further there were some observations of an opposite tendency. Mr. William Canning still urged his hazarding the quotation. "No," answered Mr. 1826. Æt. 44.

probably could have been given from authentic sources only by Lord Brougham. Curious stories were told at the time of Court intrigues employed to propitiate the King, who did not disguise his aversion to the Whigs and their principles. He went so far as to state on some public occasions that it was only from compulsion that he had yielded to the new arrangements. Most powerful aid was received by Mr. Canning from Sir William Knighton, the Keeper of the Privy Purse—a man of no common ability and ambition, who hoped to make this coalition instrumental to his further advancement. When in practice as a physician, he was remarkable for the ascendency he exercised over the minds of his patients, much to their benefit. The same faculty followed him to Court. He thoroughly knew the King's weaknesses, and was loved and feared by his master in an almost incredible degree. The King sent him on several secret missions abroad, and he had qualities that would have made him a first-rate diplomatist. His refined tastes and winning manners, combined with great sagacity and knowledge of the world, rendered him, as I can say from experience, a very agreeable companion.—AUTHOR.

* The Rev. William Canning, elder brother of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, an accomplished and excellent man, at one time chaplain to the Embassy in Persia. He died in 1860, at an advanced age.—AUTHOR.

1826. Æt. 44. Canning, "I dare not. Brougham will find me out. Nothing ever escapes him."

The union, however, could not have been lasting. They were the two master-spirits of the House—men of rare genius and unbounded ambition—raised so far above all other members, as to be unavoidable antagonists. Many debates were prolonged, because each waited for the other to rise, that he might have the advantage of the reply. There was, indeed, occasionally, a fierceness in their rivalry that betrayed mutual aversion. Even during these negotiations Mr. Canning spoke at times resentfully of the extent of Mr. Brougham's interference; and far from showing any disposition to obtain his assistance as a colleague, was known to be planning his removal from Parliament by raising him to the Bench.*

Once convinced of the general feeling of the party, Lord Althorp saw that any obstinate resistance on his part would only aggravate the evils which he had desired to avert. He gave his adhesion to the new Government, and took the earliest opportunity of stating his reasons for doing so, when he did not disguise his difficulties with respect to the Catholic question, or his differences with Mr. Canning on Parliamentary Reform and the Repeal of the Test Act;—but these, he said, all yielded to the consideration that there was no choice between a Govern-

* Mr. Canning showed no such jealousy of Sir Robert Peel, and did his utmost to prevent the severance of their political connection.—(Stapylton's Life of Canning.)—AUTHOR.

ment generally actuated by liberal and enlightened principles, and one of Toryism in its most odious form. His declaration removed the scruples of many of the independent Whigs. What was scarcely of less importance, Lord Spencer came down to the Lords, which he rarely attended, and made a manly speech in favour of the Ministry, which derived additional value from the angry and hostile speeches of Lord Ellenborough and Lord Grey on the other side. 1826. Æt. 42.

One incident in the change of Ministry that gave Lord Althorp much satisfaction on private grounds, was the appointment of his brother Robert to the post of private secretary to the Lord High Admiral, the Duke of Clarence. Captain Spencer more than deserved such a distinction. He had been from his entrance into the Navy generally on foreign service. For some years he had been employed as captain of the "Owen Glendower,"* in South America,

* Whilst Captain Spencer commanded the "Owen Glendower" (in 1820), his family were much shocked by a communication from the Admiralty of his death at Buenos Ayres, in a duel with his first lieutenant. The intelligence had been transmitted from Monte Video by an old friend of Lord Spencer's, the Admiral commanding in the Pacific, Sir Thomas Hardy; and there being no reason to doubt its authenticity, the family believed it to be only too true. Biographical accounts of Captain Spencer appeared in several of the periodical publications. Nearly two months later, a fresh despatch came from the Admiral, contradicting the report; and the circumstances under which the mistake is stated to have originated are exceedingly curious, as showing the risk always inseparable from circumstantial evidence.

"The report, it seems, was brought from Buenos Ayres to Monte Video by a coasting vessel, the captain of which, a respectable man, well known on the station, mentioned the death of the captain of the 'frigata,' as a fact which he heard publicly talked of on the day of his leaving the port; adding, that he had not only seen the 'Owen

1826–27. Æt. 44-45.

during the War of Independence, when the tact and determination which he displayed in his relations with the Spanish Government and the new Republics, sometimes acting as a diplomatist, and sometimes as an officer, in the protection of British commerce, gained him a high reputation. He afterwards was sent to the Mediterranean, as captain of the "Naiad,"* and he fully maintained his character in a mission to Algiers, when he obtained, by threats of an immediate attack on the port, the rescue of a ship improperly detained by the Dey,

Glendower' in deep mourning, with yards topped, colours half-mast high, and minute guns repeatedly firing, but also the funeral procession, when the body of the captain of the 'frigata' was landed with a guard of marines and a number of sailors. Nor could he be charged with untruth, since the captain of a 'frigata' had died on the very day in question, and the 'Owen Glendower' was put into deep mourning on account of the death of George III.; and it happened, that the ship's boats being sent for provisions, with a guard of marines for protection against the marauders in the suburbs, had landed just as the body of the captain was brought on shore. Unfortunately the Admiral and his officers were very moderate Spanish scholars, and did not know that 'frigata' means a three-masted vessel, whether a ship of war, or otherwise; and the death of the poor captain of a merchantman was mistaken by the Spanish sailors, not unnaturally, for that of Captain Spencer. The duel was quite imaginary, and only believed because the first lieutenant, an angry, ill-conditioned man, had stated before several witnesses, that he intended to call out his captain—which, however, he never did. On this occasion, Lady Spencer prevailed on Lord Althorp to discontinue the mourning which up to that time he had worn for Lady Althorp, assuring him that otherwise the report would still be believed."—*Ex rel.* Admiral Evans, (who was then serving in the "Owen Glendower.")—AUTHOR.

There is a full account of this affair in the Althorp Library. Lord Althorp *to the last refused to believe it*, saying it was simply impossible that his brother should have drawn his sword on his own first lieutenant on his own quarter-deck (which was the story), and he was hardly moved when the contradiction came.—LORD LYTTELTON.

* Captain Spencer commanded the "Naiad" from April, 1823, till October, 1826.—EDITOR.

which had been refused to previous applications. It was not until the guns of the Naiad were prepared for action that the Dey yielded. Captain Spencer was esteemed a first-rate sailor. No officer stood higher for proficiency in naval gunnery. None more completely commanded the attachment of his men, for although somewhat proud, he was inflexibly just, and had a warm and generous heart. He was an excellent linguist, and considering his active life, an accomplished man. 1826. Æt. 44.

Lord Goderich forms a Government.

One of the few events that marked the short-lived administration of Mr. Canning, was his promise of an early appointment of a Finance Committee. This was redeemed by his successor; and Mr. Huskisson applied, through Lord Spencer, to Lord Althorp to be the chairman. The latter accepted the office, but the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Herries, protested against the selection, partly as having been made without consulting him, and partly on the ground of Lord Althorp's decided opinions. This protest augured ill for the stability of Lord Goderich's Government, and eventually was the cause of its dissolution, as Mr. Huskisson admitted in his explanatory speech. The Duke of Wellington, on coming into office, substituted Sir Henry Parnell for Lord Althorp as chairman of the Committee, with the full consent of the latter, who was content to be one of its most active and useful members.

Lord Althorp named chairman of the Finance Committee.

The following letters from Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer present a valuable commentary on this brief

1827. Æt. 45. episode in our political history, whilst they reflect the candid and honest nature of the writer.

"My dear Father,

"I am very much obliged to you for your letter; but I am sorry that the gout continued, for I hoped when I saw you that it would not prove a regular fit. I like your account of what is going on about the Ministry: surely if Canning has once taken the decided step of insisting upon having his own way, he must see, by the difficulties of his adversaries, that he has the game in his own hands. I certainly should not feel that a Ministry formed by him upon Liberal principles, and with a great majority of them agreeing with him, was a divided Ministry, because Peel was one of them. I should not feel this in the first instance, unless by their measures they proved that they were acting on a compromise of principle. I should give Peel credit for fair dealing if he once consented to submit: but if the Chancellor remains in, one can put no confidence in any professions that Canning may make.* I shall come to Althorp on Wednesday.

"Yours most dutifully and affectionately,

"ALTHORP.

"Wiseton, *April 11th*, 1827."

"My dear Father,

"The offer which the Duke of Clarence has made to Bob is a compliment, and a most satisfactory proof that his merits are duly appreciated. This, although it will not raise his character one jot in the opinion of those who know him, is still a most agreeable testimony as to the general estimation in which he is held. It is also very satisfactory, as it proves that the Duke of Clarence

* At this time Lord Althorp seems to have anticipated a more equal distribution of power amongst the Whigs and Liberal Tories than was subsequently proposed by Mr. Canning.—Author.

intends at least to select the most proper persons for all important stations. But it is a very serious question whether the offer ought to be accepted. Bob will not only be confined in an office, perhaps not very agreeable, certainly very laborious, during the reign of George the Fourth; but if his taking the office answers at all, he must make up his mind to being a courtier during the reign of William the Fourth; and if Bob was an ordinary man, I should undoubtedly advise him to refuse it, because in that case, in return for this great sacrifice, he would not be able to do more good than any other person placed in the same situation. But Bob is not an ordinary man: he possesses the highest degree of practical knowledge of the naval service, and first-rate abilities to bring his knowledge to bear; and what in the present question is of great importance, he possesses the power of influencing those under whom he serves, to a degree greater perhaps than ever belonged to a man. It is probable, therefore, that in this office he may render the most essential service to the country, such services as no other man could render in a similar situation, and as he says he is ready to make the sacrifice, I think he ought to do it.

1827. Æt. 45.

* * * * *

"Yours most dutifully and affectionately,

"ALTHORP.

"WISETON, *July 28th*, 1827."

"MY DEAR FATHER,

"I am very much obliged to you for your letters and the information which they have given me. I also have heard from Lord Holland, which is all I know, except from the newspapers. It appears to me that the death of Canning leaves the Administration, as to principle, just as it was before, certainly with a great diminution of ability. But as the principle remains the same, I do not see any reason to take a different course from the one which we had determined to take, and had taken already.

1827. Æt. 45.

Our object has been, and still ought to be, to keep out the ultra Tories, because the present Administration is a less evil than a pure Tory one would be, and much less depends upon their measures. Lord Lansdowne having consented to allow Lord Goderich to lead in the House of Lords, I do not see how he could object to his forming the Ministry; and certainly I should expect quite as honest a Premier in Lord Goderich, as in Canning. Peel appears to be out of the question, and of course Lord Eldon, &c., so I do not see how the Ministry can be worse than it was, and cannot feel more desponding about politics than I did before.

"We have a terribly rainy week; Tuesday and Wednesday we could not stir out at all: yesterday and to-day we could not get out till 12, and the moors are a sheet of water. Yesterday I netted 7 brace, Davenport* one bird, Ord† and Joy‡ 10½ brace. To-day I netted 5½ brace, Davenport one brace, and Ward and Joy 15 brace. My dogs are doing very well except the young one, who is good for nothing I am afraid. Patch is at the top of the list, Rothe is not here, having lost a claw, and being consequently lame. This last information is intended for

* Edward Davenport of Capethorne, M.P., a hot Whig, with strange crotchets, however, about the currency.—AUTHOR.

† Mr. William Ord, M.P. for Morpeth, the proprietor of Whitfield, a very amiable man and sound politician—a great favourite with the Whig aristocracy. He represented one of the Divisions of Northumberland for some time after the Reform Bill; subsequently the town of Newcastle-on-Tyne.—AUTHOR.

‡ Mr. Hall Joy. He greatly distinguished himself at Eton and Oxford; and not in scholarship only, but in riding, dancing, fencing, swimming, and all manly exercises. He had a natural turn for speaking in public, and I recollect the vociferous applause given him by his schoolfellows at the Eton "Speeches"—a compliment paid only to one other boy in my day, Mr. Matthews, afterwards the author of the "Diary of an Invalid." Mr. Joy was a Wiltshire squire, and a barrister. He was tolerably successful before Parliamentary Committees. Vanity was his foible, and stood much in his way—otherwise he had many valuable qualities, and would have risen higher in his profession, but for his death in middle age.—AUTHOR.

Bob, as I do not think you are acquainted with the individuals. 1827. Æt. 45.

"Yours most dutifully and affectionately,

ALTHORP.

"Whitfield, Northumberland, *August 17th*, 1827."

"My dear Father,

"I am sorry to say that the inclosed letter confirms your views of the present state of things, and proves that I was wrong in hoping that any good would come from Lord Goderich's Administration: I am afraid no good can be looked for in the present reign. Let us hope for better things in the reign of William the Fourth. There is a frankness and apparent honesty in his note to Bob on his arrival in town, that is much more satisfactory than anything else I see in our prospects. I am very sorry, however, that it has deprived me of Bob's visit.

"Yours, &c.,

"ALTHORP.

"Wiscton, *August 28th*, 1827."

"My dear Father,

"I send you another letter which I have received from Lord Holland: he tries to gild the pill as much as he can; but I fear it is evident that the Whig Ministers have no more influence in the Cabinet, than Charles Wynn had when he joined the Tories. It makes very little difference whether the King nominated a Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, or whether the First Minister did so without consulting his Colleagues: if they stay in, they surrender at discretion, in the one case, to the King, —in the other, to their Tory Colleagues, and henceforward are mere cyphers. The thing that appears the most foolish is, that our three Whig friends having determined to submit, should absent themselves from the Cabinets at which the thing was done: that is, that having been obliged to swallow a nasty dose, they take care that the

1827. Æt. 45.

faces they make should be seen by the whole country. This must not only destroy all cordiality and concert in the Ministry, but by making their want of power notorious, diminishes what little they might have hoped for. Nothing, however, shall at present shake me from the resolution I have taken, of being in an armed neutrality. I have heard from Poyntz, who takes the same view of politics that I do; and I shall be very little surprised if Lord Lansdowne finds himself deserted by the great body of our party; that is so far deserted, that though they will not actually oppose him, they will be entirely neutral.

"I have had capital sport: I told you that I killed 20½ brace on the 1st; on Monday I killed 15 brace; on Tuesday 19 brace; on Wednesday 8 brace, on Thursday 11½ brace; and on Friday 11 brace, a cat, and a weasel. Of these, 2 brace were wounded birds of other people's which my dogs caught, for I have not yet shot on preserved ground, so that to my own gun I have killed 88 brace in six days. I am shooting better than I did; but if I could expect to keep up to my work of Thursday and Friday, I should distinguish myself very much this year.

* * * * *

"ALTHORP.

"Leamington, *September 9th*, 1827."

"My dear Father,

"I am quite clear that if it should be offered to me to take the chair of the Finance Committee, I ought to accept it; but I do not think it would be right for me to give so decided an answer without previously communicating with Tavistock and Milton. I will, therefore, write to them immediately, telling them my opinion and the reasons for it, and I have no doubt they will agree with me. In the meantime you had better, I think, tell Tierney that I am inclining to accept the offer; but before I give a positive answer I should like to have a few days for con-

sideration. To say the truth, I do not think the offer will be made to me. I was given to understand that the King would have objected to my being in the Cabinet, had I not put a stop at once to any discussion on the subject: the reason for this, I conclude, was the part I have taken in matters in which he felt the Royal family particularly interested,—my motion, for instance, about the 10,000*l.* given him as an outfit at the Regency, my taking the lead about the grant to the Duke of Clarence, and my general conduct upon questions of this sort. Now, if I am right in this, he must still more object to my being placed in a situation which will give me the best possible opportunity of enforcing my opinions on these matters; and I conclude the Ministers must consult him as to the person who is to be put into the chair of that Committee,—I therefore do not think the offer will be made to me. 1827. Æt. 45.

"Yours, &c.,

"ALTHORP.

"Wiseton, *November 24th*, 1827."

The miserable close of Lord Goderich's Ministry, followed by the accession of some of its most able members to a Tory Government, destroyed the credit of the Coalition. It was admitted to have been a failure—even well-informed politicians asserted that the Whigs had been first decoyed and then betrayed.* Indeed, it seemed as if by a pre- Dissolution of Lord Goderich's Government.

* Lord Macaulay, in his clever Political Georgics, published in 1828, writes:—

How Cabinets are formed and how destroyed,
How Tories are confirmed and Whigs decoyed,
How in new times a prudent man should vote,
In what conjuncture he should turn his coat;
The truths fallacious and the candid lies,
And all the lore of stock majorities,
I sing, great Premier.—*Miscellanies.*—AUTHOR.

1827. Æt. 45.

cipitate eagerness for office they had given the Tories a complete triumph, and sacrificed all the advantages of their position. Fallen from power, and deserted by their new allies, they took the field at the opening of the Session in diminished numbers, evidently unprovided with any plan of action, and unequal to any hostile party movement. Lord Althorp, when he resumed his seat, felt like a soldier in a routed army.* He frankly acknowledged in one of his early speeches that he knew of no party to which he belonged, and saw no immediate prospect of again becoming a party man. Neither "had he any confidence in the new Ministers; but before he opposed them he should wait to see their measures."

The Duke of Wellington Premier.

It was soon discovered that the Liberal element, infused into the Tory Ministry of Lord Liverpool by Mr. Canning, had revived in that of the Duke of Wellington, who became the unconscious and unwilling instrument of its progress.† Lord John

* Lord Althorp, unlike Mr. Brougham, Sir Francis Burdett, and the majority of the Whigs, had not crossed over to the Ministerial side of the House at the time of the Coalition, as was before intimated. —AUTHOR.

† If the Duke had contemplated the liberal policy which distinguished his administration, it was very unlike his usual sagacity to take so early an opportunity of ridding himself of the friends of Mr. Canning, who could have been of such material assistance to him. He took this step at the recommendation of Lord Bathurst, who happened to call on him as he was reading Mr. Huskisson's letter, and urged his immediately acting on it. Many persons at the time, however, considered that he thus strengthened himself by propitiating the Tories; and they were not an insignificant number, who resented the exclusion of Lord Eldon and other persons holding extreme opinions from the Cabinet.—AUTHOR.

Russell was, in the first Session, allowed to pass the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, to the delight, and with the assistance of Lord Althorp, who had always thought Mr. Canning wrong in supposing that by thus relieving the Dissenters any obstacles would be raised to the emancipation of the Catholics—an opinion fully borne out by the result. When the Emancipation Bill was brought forward by Sir Robert Peel, it also received a warm and generous support from Lord Althorp, who welcomed it as cordially as if it had come from his own side, and had never been opposed by the Tory side of the House. When the Ministers were taunted by the High Tory seceders with inconsistency and deception, he yielded a ready assent to the plea they set up of public necessity, and he gave the same liberal construction to all their proceedings. An apparently blundering arrangement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the funding of Exchequer Bills, was by his advice passed over with gentle animadversion; and when the new Secretary of the Colonies, Sir George Murray, privately intimated a desire to meet the views of the Whigs* in redressing the grievances

1830. Æt. 48.

* Mr. Stanley, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Evelyn Denison, and Mr. Stuart Wortley (since better known as the Earl of Derby, Lord Taunton, the Speaker of the House of Commons, and Lord Wharncliffe), were among the few Englishmen of rank who had travelled in North America. During their tour they passed some months in Canada, where they witnessed the abuses in the government of the colony, and the discontent of a large section of the colonists. On their return home, they endeavoured to draw the attention of Parliament to the subject; but their success did not correspond to the justice of their

1829. Æt. 47. of the North American Colonies, if time and opportunity were allowed him, the overture gave Lord Althorp the most lively satisfaction. Similar communications passed (I believe) between the new Secretary at War and Lord Althorp: indeed the speeches of Murray and Hardinge on the Catholic Question had captivated the Whigs—for those enlightened soldiers were little swayed by party prejudices. Hardinge lived on the most friendly footing at Spencer House, so that when the Wellington Ministry broke up, Lady Spencer actually proposed to him to join Lord Grey's Cabinet, and his refusal was grounded more on his attachment to the Duke than on any difference of principles.* These indications, now that the Ministers were almost at open war with the High Tories, and that the Catholic Emancipation Act had removed the great barrier to any union in principle between the Whigs and Moderate Tories, made Lord Althorp regard a coalition as no longer impracticable; and

cause. Sir George Murray has the merit of being the first Colonial Secretary who viewed such questions with any degree of fairness, unbiassed by official prejudices; and this is more to his credit, as he had formerly been the Commander of the Forces in Canada, when he must have necessarily been placed in intimate relations with the party to which the proposed reforms were highly objectionable.—AUTHOR.

* Another instance of Hardinge's liberal predilections is, that during the progress of the Reform Bill, when rumours were rife of a difference between Lord Brougham and Lord Grey, he sounded me as to the possibility of the former being induced to join the Duke of Wellington's party, assuring me that they all regarded him with the warmest admiration, and would receive him with open arms. Of course I gave no encouragement to the proposal; but Hardinge knew well that Lord Brougham valued fame too highly to be the Chancellor of a *Tory* Cabinet.—AUTHOR.

he even expected to see the Duke, under the influence of coming events, both accept the foreign policy of Mr. Canning,* and adapt his views of constitutional questions generally to the altered temper of the times. 1829. Æt. 47.

The following letter is written in the spirit which Lord Althorp shared with many of his Whig friends :—

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL SPENCER.

"My dear Father,

"The plan for funding the Exchequer Bills appears to be a very great blunder. We had a quiet and good debate upon it last night; and I think the result was, that a great mistake had been made. In fact, it certainly appears to me that it is nothing different from borrowing money to pay debt: in the first instance, it is only a transfer of securities, but the end will be that we shall have created three millions of four per cents., and have applied three millions to the purchase of three per cents., speaking in round numbers; but at the same time we shall have got rid of three millions of unfunded debt. Now, if the three millions of surplus had been applied at once to the reduction of the unfunded debt, the public would have performed a much simpler operation, and have saved a good deal of money.†

"There have been reports of the Duke of Wellington

* The chief blots on the Duke's foreign policy, in the eyes of the Whigs, were his tacit countenance shown to Don Miguel in Portugal, and his relations with the absolutist Ministers of Charles the Tenth. No doubt both were unintentionally exaggerated. The Duke believed Don Miguel to be really the choice of the Portuguese people: and as soon as Louis Philippe was known to be that of the French, the Duke advised his immediate recognition by England.—Author.

† The debate as reported in Hansard's Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. xxi. p. 1256, is unintelligible; at least, it was pronounced so by an ex-

1829–30. Æt. 47-48.

being out, but of course without any foundation. I hear that Sir George Murray is giving great satisfaction in his Colonial management: he has put himself into communication with Stanley and Labouchere, and told them fairly what he wishes to do is what they wish, and that he will do as much of it immediately, as he can. They are miserably weak in the House of Commons; but the general opinion among our people is that they are conducting the Government well, and on good principles. Our situation is now a very agreeable one. As the Duke has not thought proper to ask for any assistance from our ranks, we are under no obligations to him, we may take our own line as we please, not violently certainly; but we may criticise whenever we may think criticism required, and no one has a right to complain, so that there is no restraint upon us whatever, and we possess a perfect freedom of action.

"Yours, &c.

"ALTHORP.

"Albany, *May 12th*, 1829."

Chancellor of the Exchequer, of whom I asked its meaning. On inquiring at the Treasury, I found that Mr. Goulburn had a motive for the obscureness of his speech. It was the practice of the time to keep up a mystification on questions of finance, and this transaction was a preliminary step towards the conversion of the 4½ per cents., for which he wished the public to remain unprepared. At the time of Mr. Goulburn's operation, the unfunded debt (which is now a little more than 12,000,000*l.*) amounted to more than 28,000,000*l.*, and the annual interest to 845,000*l.* The funding of which Lord Althorp complained was, no doubt, with the object that so large an amount of unfunded debt might be kept afloat at a moderate rate of interest, and this was greatly facilitated by withdrawing 3,000,000*l.* from the market. If it had been necessary to raise the interest only one farthing a day, the increased annual charge would have been more than 100,000*l.* The surplus estimated on the Budget at 3,000,000*l.*, proved at the end of the financial year to be only 1,711,000*l.*, so that Mr. Goulburn, if wrong in one calculation, was right in another. A prudent minister is bound to provide against such contingencies as these, in deciding upon prospective measures of finance; and it would be very unfair, in passing judgment on these measures after the event, not to keep in view the possible occurrence of dangers which his foresight has averted.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48.

With these impressions, Lord Althorp attended the meeting of Parliament on the 4th of February, 1830. The first night's debate placed him in a position of some difficulty. A passage had been, injudiciously, admitted into the Royal Speech, noticing the distress (which was the subject of general complaint throughout the country) as confined to particular districts. This gave the High Tory seceders a pretext for an amendment, the object of which was to overthrow the Government. Mr. Canning's friends heartily united with them for that purpose. Lord Althorp desired the Ministers to remain in office; and yet he felt that, in voting for the Address, he should identify himself with them more closely than his sentiments warranted, besides sharing the unpopularity which in England may be observed always to attend the absence of sympathy with the grievances of the people. Moreover he discovered that Mr. Brougham and so many of the leading Whigs had committed themselves the other way, that he would appear to be sacrificing his friends to the Ministry. Accordingly, he supported the amendment, simply on the ground of its undeniable truth, while he virtually repudiated any concurrence in the motives of those in whom it originated, by his warm and certainly honest praise of the Government; for he raised no objection to the course taken by Lord Howick, who, perceiving the amendment likely to be carried, induced many of the independent members to join him in voting

1830. Æt. 48.

against it, which alone saved the Government from a signal defeat.*

Speeches on Economical Reform.

This was the only great party fight during the Session, and its results proved the Government to be in no immediate danger from the superior numbers of the Opposition. Whilst the latter were agreed as to the pressure and extent of the distress, they entirely differed as to the plans for its mitigation or relief. In this conflict of opinion the Ministers found safety; but their weakness provoked a swarm of motions on the state of the country and the public expenditure, which, however unsuccess-

* Roebuck's History, v. i. p. 138.—The majority was not, as the author insinuates, "the result of an intrigue," nor was Lord Howick moved by any feeling against Mr. Brougham. He acted independently on his own judgment; and his example, he writes to me, "influenced some others—as one sheep going through a gap encourages others to follow—who were in great doubt as to their votes. I was led to vote in this manner from my believing that it was not desirable at that moment to turn out the Duke of Wellington. I had no confidence in the Canningites (as they were called); and the Duke's Government having recently carried Catholic Emancipation, there had yet been nothing to show whether, after the schism thus produced among the Tories, he would endeavour to strengthen his Government by a liberal policy, or regain them by one of an opposite character. Until he had a fair trial, I thought he ought not to be turned out, and, least of all, by supporting an amendment proposed, in the pure spirit of faction, by an old Tory in revenge for Catholic Emancipation; and joined no less factiously by those who had left the Duke's Government in 1828. What ultimately decided my vote, about which I had been in very painful doubt all the evening, was a very bitter speech of Huskisson against the Government. I remember, after the division, Sir George Warrender took me home in his carriage, and attacked me violently for the mischief, he said, I had done by saving the Government." If this note had appeared before the publication of Mr. Roebuck's History, I am sure that his sneering remarks on the Whigs would not have been written.—Author.

ful, added to the credit and popularity of the Whigs. Some of the latter undoubtedly were disposed to force the Duke into a coalition, at the risk of throwing out his Government, and Sir James Graham particularly subjected himself to this imputation, in making his very clever speech (on the 12th of February) for the reduction of the salaries in the Public Departments, a brilliant performance for an inexperienced member; but Lord Althorp, content with the explanation offered by the Government, gave no support to the Resolution, or praise to the speech. A few days later, when Mr. Hume moved a Resolution for the reduction of the Public Establishments, in a speech of some hours (the best by far, I recollect Lord Sefton saying, that he had ever made), Lord Althorp both spoke and voted for it, not, as he candidly observed, that he approved of a reduction to the extent proposed, but because a case was in his opinion made out for more immediate and decided action than the Ministers would agree to take. Lord Althorp had been scarcely behind Mr. Hume in attention to Economical Reform. He had long fruitlessly stood out against useless offices and extravagant estimates, and if these latterly seemed rather to escape his censure, it was only because he could obtain no support in opposing them. It is questionable whether Mr. Hume's almost numberless and endless speeches, addressed either to empty benches or an impatient audience, and followed by signal defeats, really promoted any useful object. He certainly contri-

1830. Æt. 48.

1830. Æt. 48.

buted to make the subject so distasteful and unwelcome to the generality of members, as to render the leading Whigs less zealous in pursuing it. In 1827 he contested Mr. Canning's estimates with an obstinacy that could only serve the purposes of the Tories, and thus brought upon himself the merited reproaches of Mr. Brougham. It was when acting in concert with the Whigs that he first made an impression on the House, nor had he any reason to complain of their backwardness when the enfeebled condition of the Ministers held out a prospect of success. This night presents one of the earliest instances of their cordial co-operation. A want of discernment, great obstinacy, and some coarseness of feeling, were unfortunately not less his characteristics than good-humour, honesty, and thorough independence. He always seemed out of his element in an unreformed House of Commons. Lord Althorp liked the man, and valued his services to the country, and, in return, received many testimonies, both in public and private, of his esteem and regard; one of them being the good understanding he maintained with the Whigs during the remainder of the Session.

Mr. Poulett Thomson.

The Ministry endeavoured to stem the current of opinion which ran strongly against them, by large and judicious reductions, both in the public expenditure and taxation; but some of the Whigs insisted that the latter, if conducted on sound principles, "might be carried to an infinitely greater extent," without any loss to the revenue. Under the sanction of Mr.

Huskisson, the question was brought before the House, on a motion for a Committee, on the 25th of March, by Mr. Poulett Thomson, the member for Dover, who, though only in his first Parliament, had already distinguished himself in the debate on the Silk Duties. He was a Russia merchant, clever, and thoroughly conversant with business; as he proved on this occasion, by the comprehensive view he took of the fiscal policy of the country, and his exposure of the vicious character of many of the existing duties, among which he specified and ably commented on the Paper Duty. He wanted the fulness and depth, and, it must be admitted, the modesty of Mr. Huskisson, for he had a dogmatism of tone and manner ill-suited to his youthful appearance*;—but in a ready flow of words, an animated

1830. Æt. 48.

* He was then little more than thirty, and a tall, slender figure and light complexion made him look still younger. He had formed his views of trade and taxation in the school of Mill and Ricardo, whom he regarded as great statesmen, and there was often an ostentation of *doctrine* in his reasoning, which the practical and official experience of Mr. Huskisson successfully avoided. Hence his speeches excited distrust, if not alarm, in the uninitiated in the science, and but tardy justice was done to their merits in the House of Commons. He had been neither at a public school nor at the university, which, in the opinion of his biographer, gave him decision and self-confidence, but it also denied him the advantage of early social intercourse with young men of the class and position amongst which he now found himself, and he rated them too low. He says in 1828, in a letter to a friend: "Why, God bless you, the majority of the House of Commons, aye, 600 out of 650 senators, are opposed on principle to any change, be it what it may, and a whole session could be spent by them in considering whether they had better consider." (Memoir of Lord Sydenham, p. 36.) Mr. Thomson had two elder brothers, the eldest, Mr. Andrew Thomson, at one time Governor of the Bank of England, a person of great intelligence and probity, was accidentally drowned many years before by the upsetting of a boat on the Thames,

1830. Æt. 48.

diction, and the advantage of voice and delivery, he was incomparably the superior. Without attempting to answer his arguments, the Ministers sheltered themselves under the obvious objections to a Committee that would interfere with the functions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but they cautiously abstained from any expression of opinion that might prevent their eventually adopting the suggestions of the Whigs; and this was the only consolation which the latter obtained for a poor minority, the numbers being 78 to 167. The motion, indeed, was designed to test the sentiments of the Ministry on the application of a great principle, and might be regarded as the sketch of a Whig Budget; not, as has been stated elsewhere,* "a mere bidding for popularity without fear of annoyance at a future period," but a foreshadowing of reforms subsequently carried by the Whigs, at the risk of their popularity, when they came into office. Lord Althorp, to whom Mr. Poulett Thomson had particularly attached himself, supported the motion with marked earnestness, in common with Mr. Huskisson, and, in doing so, boldly recommended the substitution of an Income Tax for some of the duties that pressed most heavily on the industry of the country;† a proposal censured at

near Marlow. The next is Mr. Poulett Scrope, of Coombe Abbey, Wilts, who has long represented Stroud, and is the author of some valuable works—not the least being the life of his distinguished relation.—AUTHOR.

* Roebuck's History, v. i. p. 165.

† "Lord Althorp observed much had been said as to property tax, and he believed that he differed considerably from his friends around

the time as rash and unsound, but remembered with different feelings when carried, some twelve years later, by Sir Robert Peel. The motion had originated at a meeting of Opposition members,* held in Lord Althorp's rooms; and he there stated the views which he afterwards expressed in the House, much to the alarm of Mr. Spring Rice, who, waiting till the meeting was over, told him plainly that if he broached such doctrines in public, he would become the most unpopular man in England—a prediction happily not destined to be fulfilled. Mr. Spring Rice, however, was not singular in his opinion. Mr. Brougham, notwithstanding his wonderful sagacity, considered that the Income Tax would be fatal to any ministry that imposed it, as he said to me some years afterwards. 1830. Æt. 48.

Lord Althorp was more successful in his resistance to the attempts made by the extreme sections of the Opposition to obtain a depreciation of the currency—one of the few objects which High Tories and Radicals could have in common. He had always condemned the standard of value fixed by Mr. Peel's Bill as unjust and oppressive, especially to the landed interest; but he thought its alteration would so disturb all monetary transactions as to

him. Still he had no hesitation in saying, that to grant relief to the productive population, by a reduction of taxes, and to propose a property tax to meet the deficiency thus occasioned, would be a very good measure." (Hansard's Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. xxiii. p. 907.)

* Mr. Morrison, Mr. Alexander Baring, Sir Henry Parnell, and Mr. Spring Rice, were among the members present on the occasion. Mr. Baring disapproved altogether of the changes contemplated by Mr. Poulett Thomson and Lord Althorp.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48.

amount to a national calamity. The question was debated, through four long nights, on a motion* for a Committee to inquire into the public distress, when it was not so much the force of conviction as of authority, the firm and honourable adhesion of the leading Whigs to the Ministers, and the palpable impossibility of making a Government, if the motion were carried, that rallied so many members round the Ministers, and gave them an overwhelming majority. That the debate failed in shaking the deeply-seated impressions of many independent members in favour of a paper currency, is known to all who lived in their society—but their patriotism was stronger than their prejudices. Lord Althorp had a large share in this moral triumph. He rose, as Mr. Huskisson amidst loud cheers concluded a very able and argumentative speech. At first, from general exhaustion, the clamour for adjournment made it difficult for him to obtain attention, but he soon gained the ear of the House, and his speech virtually decided the question—for, like himself, it was plain, honest, sensible, and resolute, and many members who had hesitated as to their votes, felt themselves safe in following a course which his conscience, not less than his superior knowledge of the subject, evidently dictated. The other leading Whigs were content to give silent votes, none perhaps feeling eager to be conspicuous in opposing a motion highly popular among the larger towns and country constituencies, where the strength of

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Sec. Ser., v. xxiii. p. 391.

their party was the greatest. Indeed, the Whigs, with whom (as the minority) the preparation of the division lists chiefly rested, did not care to publish the names of the members who voted on this occasion. 1830. Æt.

Lord Althorp thus maintained, consistently with his principles, the anomalous and at times difficult character of a member of a friendly opposition. It was not so much on the measures proposed, as on those resisted by the Ministers, that he often differed from them. He made just allowances for the difficulties of their position. Although the Estimates were above the standard which he had long conscientiously advocated, he expressed his readiness to accept them, as a great improvement on those of any former government. Other members of the party, from various motives, not always the highest, found fault with many of the items (sometimes without Lord Althorp's concurrence), and made the Committee of Supply a field for violent attacks on the Ministry. Sir James Graham,* and

* Sir James Graham's forwardness was censured at the time by many of the leading Whigs. He owed no allegiance to them, and took his own line, without much consideration of party ties. His father was a decided Tory, and he had himself in early life been regarded by the Lowther family, who lived in the neighbourhood of his country seat, as one of their most promising partisans. He announced himself as a Liberal, on returning from his travels, during which he passed some time in Spain, then the great theatre of war. The Cortes had taken refuge in Cadiz, and he often attended their debates, which he described to me as most interesting, saying that no speeches had ever delighted him more than those of the celebrated Augustin Arguellas. His own first essay in public speaking was, I believe, on the hustings at Hull, and gained him great applause. He had much advantage in these Committee fights, from his command of figures. Lord Middleton, who had been with him at a private tutor's, told me

1830. Æt. 48. Mr. Robert Gordon, the member for Cricklade, took the lead of Mr. Hume on these occasions, and infused unusual animation into the proceedings of the Committee. Then it was that Sir James displayed the talents for business and debate which secured him a seat in the Cabinet in the following December; and Mr. Gordon's success was such that Lord Macaulay, then a young member, speaking to me some years afterwards on the fleeting character of Parliamentary distinction, observed that he used to listen with admiration to his speeches, thinking them eminently clever and persuasive, and hardly venturing to hope that he might one day speak as well. Mr. Gordon was a contemporary of Sir Robert Peel, like whom he had obtained the highest honours at Oxford, and he had equally the advantage of a large fortune, and an early seat in the House of Commons; but a love of ease and social pleasure, with an indifference to the higher branches of politics, always kept him in a position below both his pretensions and his abilities.

These aggressive proceedings were not attended with proportionate results. It was only on the insignificant question of the retiring allowances to Mr. Dundas and Mr. Bathurst, that the Ministers could be placed in a minority, and then only by the support of the High Tories, whose votes might, without a serious breach of charity, be ascribed less

that he delighted in the study of arithmetic, and was particularly quick in all calculations. His young companions, however, rated his perseverance higher than his abilities.—AUTHOR.

to a love of economy than to hatred of their former chiefs. 1830. Æt. 48.

Three months of the Session had thus passed away, when the Whigs, smarting under repeated defeats, began to open their eyes to the real condition of their party. It was difficult to say what could be their policy, when on one day, many of them were ready to join, and, on the next, to oppose the Government; but of the absence of all system and concert in their proceedings there could be no doubt. Except at occasional meetings in Lord Althorp's rooms at the Albany, they never consulted in any numbers as to the course which they should take as a body; and although many members were ready to act on his judgment, it often, from his unwillingness to put himself forward, could not be known in time to be of much service. The appointment of a leader was loudly called for, but how to make a selection that would meet with general acquiescence seemed a hopeless task. At this critical moment, Mr. Portman, the member for Dorset, happened one morning to meet Mr. George Dawson, the Secretary of the Treasury, on his way to attend a Parliamentary Committee; their conversation turned on some recent defeat of the Whigs, when, Mr. Portman attempting to explain it, Mr. Dawson laughingly said, "Oh, you are a mere loose bundle of sticks, and will be always beaten." This taunt rather excited Mr. Portman, while at the same time he felt its truth, and he reported Mr. Dawson's words to his friends, Mr.

Lord Althorp Leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons.

1830. Æt. 48.

Pendarves* and Sir Francis Lawley,† country gentlemen like himself, of high standing and consideration in the House, when they met in the Committee over which Lord Althorp was presiding; and the result was an agreement to propose to him to undertake the Leadership. As soon as the business was concluded, and the room had been cleared, they drew his attention to the slights of late put on the Whigs by the Government, their differences among themselves, and the little influence they now exercised on public affairs, and assured him they spoke the sense of a very large majority, in saying that these evils could only be remedied by his becoming their leader. The offer had already been repeatedly made to him, and an adverse critic is correct in observing "that he was not only willing, but eager, to place the burden and confer the honour on any one in preference to himself. Mr. Brougham he evidently considered as the only fit person for the task;"‡ but he now could no longer disguise from himself, that from various causes the great body of the Whigs were

* Mr. Pendarves, of Pendarves, in Cornwall, and during many years one of the members for the county. He was an accomplished and high-spirited country gentleman, and always an unflinching Liberal. His original name had been Stackhouse, and he was then a tutor at Oxford, but on succeeding to the name and estates of Mr. Pendarves, he took at once an elevated position in the county, and possessed great local influence till his death. He was a good speaker, and his remarkably frank and prepossessing manners, and an elegant person, all contributed to make him a general favourite.—AUTHOR.

† Sir Francis Lawley, Bart., the elder brother of Mr. Beilby Thompson, afterwards Lord Wenlock,—a man of talents as well as of fashion, of large estate and powerful connections, strongly attached to the Whigs.—AUTHOR.

‡ Roebuck's History, v. i., p. 465.

averse to Mr. Brougham, and would follow no one but himself, and he answered, that if forty-five members should come to him on the following Saturday with the same request he would make no further objection, only he desired that neither of his three friends would mention the subject, because he wished to speak to Mr. Brougham, Sir James Graham, and Lord John Russell, before they could hear of it from any one else. 1830. Æt. 48.

More than the required attendance was easily obtained for the Saturday, and the meeting passed off most satisfactorily. Mutual confidence made any long speeches unnecessary: Lord Althorp was accepted as leader, with loud cheers and warm expressions of gratitude. Thanks having been voted to him, he briefly intimated that it was only on questions of trade and finance that he could pretend to be of much use to them, but his advice should be always at their service, and their future meetings would, of course, take place in his rooms.*

He thought it desirable that there should be nothing like concealment in their proceedings. Accordingly a few nights afterwards, he availed himself of a casual opportunity in the House, to say, with reference to a statement of Sir Robert Peel's, "I give notice that *we* intend to take the sense of the House on this question." Lord Portman tells me

* I owe this information to the kindness of Lord Portman and the late Lord Northbrook, who attended the meeting, but unfortunately could recollect little of the speeches.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48. that he cannot forget Sir Robert Peel's start when Lord Althorp uttered the word "*we*."

It had been feared that some of the Whigs might take offence at the meeting in the Albany not having been a public one, and would call for another at Brooks's, but all seemed content, and none more than Mr. Brougham and Sir James Graham; the latter, indeed, became so devoted to Lord Althorp, that he afterwards called on him every morning to talk over their political prospects. Even Mr. Hume forgot his suspicion of the Whigs in his esteem for Lord Althorp, and his example was followed by the few members who generally voted with him.

The meetings in the Albany being now resumed with greatly increased numbers, and held once at least in each week, Lord Althorp succeeded both in stopping the factious attacks preparing against the Government, and in obtaining for it an honest, discriminating support. He undertook, with four other members, to maintain a vigilant supervision of the Ministerial measures, upon the understanding that all independent action was to be suspended until the sense of the party could be taken upon his reports. Thus he and his colleagues came to be called the "Watchmen."

Accession of William IV.

The King's (George IV.'s) death followed close on these arrangements. A new reign raised new hopes —perhaps intrigues. King William, moved by his partiality for Lord Holland, rather than by any political principles, of which he was scarcely susceptible, is believed to have proposed to the Duke of

Wellington the admission of some of the leading Whigs into the Cabinet, and to have been refused, the Duke probably fearing to break up his party, of whom the most influential thought the system of concession had already gone far enough. Encouraged by the assurances of his admirers that his policy was approved by moderate men of all parties, he determined to make no changes in his Ministry, and to proceed to an almost immediate dissolution. This bold proceeding took the Opposition by surprise. Unwilling that Ministers should have the advantage of a new Parliament, as well as of a new reign, they united in a vigorous resistance. Warm debates ensued on the Royal Message, when Lord Althorp, apprehensive of some reactionary proceedings on the part of Government, pleaded strongly, though ineffectually, for delay. Supported both by the High Tories and the Radicals, he ventured on two divisions, and, although no circulars had been issued, was in a minority of only 46 in one, and of 47 in the other. A few nights later, another trial of strength was taken on the postponement of the Regency Bill, of which the Whigs not unreasonably disapproved, but the fortune of the Ministers had returned, and the minority was swelled to 154, owing to the prejudices against Mr. Brougham,* with whom the motion originated. Lord Althorp, in a letter to his father, in which he laments Mr. Brougham's unpopularity,

1830. Æt. 48.

Dissolution of Parliament.

* Mr. Grant had undertaken the motion at the request of Mr. Brougham, and Lord Althorp had reluctantly acquiesced, foreseeing too clearly its unsuccessful results.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48.

finds comfort for the defeat in the expectation that he should not be put to any difficulty about refusing office; but in this he was mistaken, as these debates revealed unmistakably the decided inferiority of the Ministers to the Opposition in Parliamentary talent. Mr. Brougham especially put forth all his powers, with brilliant success. In answering a learned argument of the Solicitor-General (Sugden), on the Regency Question, he made the latter appear so ridiculous, that the whole Treasury Bench seemed convulsed with laughter. I observed Sir Robert Peel, after a vain struggle, yield like the rest, though the Solicitor-General sat by his side more than usually austere. Wit, eloquence, and reasoning seemed always at Mr. Brougham's command in his attacks on the Government, and if his violence was blamed, it was at least equally feared. The late Mr. Bonham Carter, who represented Portsmouth, an old and very intelligent member, observed to me, that no Government could maintain for any length of time this unequal contest. It must fall, either from complaints and recriminations among its supporters, or from the pressure of public opinion.

Members now rushed into the country for the elections, so that it was often difficult to collect a sufficient number to make a House, and on the 24th of July Parliament was dissolved.

Lord Althorp returned without opposition.

The dissolution brought Lord Althorp before his constituents only to receive additional proofs of their confidence by his return without opposition. He then gave himself up to rural duties, and rural

pleasures. Amongst the former was his steady attendance at the summer Northamptonshire Sessions, to the chair of which he had been elected by an unanimous vote, as successor to his father—and it was in his eyes a most gratifying distinction. He made an admirable chairman—not only in presiding over the Criminal Court, for which he took great pains to qualify himself, but in conducting the County business. His papers prove the attention he gave to the affairs of the Northampton Infirmary, and other local charitable institutions; and the example he set in this respect had a most wholesome influence on his brother magistrates, to the great advantage both of the poor and of the finances of the county.

1830. Æt. 48.

Interest in County business.

With such occasional interruptions, he passed the Recess at Wiseton, which of late had become additionally attractive to him from the success of his stock farm. Having given up hunting after Lady Althorp's death, his interest in horses and dogs had been transferred to cattle. He collected the finest specimens he could find, of various breeds, without regard to expense, and, by repeated and careful experiments in breeding and feeding, his herd was now pronounced one of the very finest in England: strangers came from distant counties to see it, and the animals fetched very high prices. His experiments were often of a scientific character, and it was a great pleasure to him when these gave scope for any algebraic calculations, his taste for figures entering into all his pursuits; but he was thoroughly practical: he could at a glance tell the good points

1830. Æt. 48.

of an animal with the skill of an experienced grazier. It gave him no offence to be told that he would have made a fortune if this had been his trade. He had collected much information from practical men, and warmly encouraged all associations that brought them into contact with the aristocracy. Thus he had some years before become a member of the Smithfield Club, an association founded in 1788, by Francis, Duke of Bedford, Lord Somerville, Mr. Bennett (of Wilts), Sir Joseph Banks, and Mr. Arthur Young, for the improvement of live stock; and when, in 1825, it appeared almost bankrupt and on the point of dissolution from the retirement of its most powerful members, he not only consented (after others had refused) to become the President, but administered its concerns so ably, that in five years he had brought it out of all its difficulties, and given it a national importance. A splendid candelabrum, costing 200 guineas, was presented to him, as the minutes of the club record, in testimony "of his valuable services in raising the Association to its present eminence." These, and other acts in the same spirit, procured for him the appellation, so often unworthily assumed, of the "Farmer's Friend."

Increasing feeling throughout the country for Reform.

To revert to politics. It is an old saying that any Ministry can govern the country during the Recess, but this was not true of the Duke of Wellington's Ministry. Between the dissolution of one Parliament, and the meeting of another, the authority of the Government seemed almost to have passed away. An angry feeling pervaded the lower classes,

showing itself, in the rural districts, by incendiary fires, which the peasantry either caused, or refused to extinguish, and in the large towns, by societies threatening still more extensive destruction. The Birmingham Political Union, the prolific parent of these societies, had originated in a league among some of the leading people of that town to obtain a repeal of Mr. Peel's Currency Bill, and their first public meeting in January (1830), was professedly with this object. The principal parties in the movement happened to be Tories. Their organization of local committees, under the control of a central body, was admirably executed, and they saw it with great concern soon diverted to mere political purposes by the excitement resulting from the French and Belgian Revolutions. Parliamentary Reform then became the watchword of an immense body of men, increasing in number, and therefore in power, with fearful rapidity; whose pretensions to a share in the administration of public affairs were incompatible with the existing state of society. From one end of the country to the other, a vague expectation of approaching evils inspired general alarm.* 1830. Æt. 48.

* An intelligent lady, the daughter of a French writer of note, who had figured in the Revolution, was present at one of the meetings of the Birmingham Union; she observed to my friend, Mr. Joseph Parkes: "I have this day been reminded of the first French Revolution. Your country is on the eve of great political changes. I noticed almost the entire company to be men under forty years of age. So it was in Paris. You are a young man. Take your part. Pilots will soon be wanted." No person could have been so well qualified to give a history of the Political Unions as Mr. Parkes, and it would have been a valuable contribution to the literature of the country.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48. The election returns added to the difficulties of the country and the Government. Ministers suffered the penalty of their want of candour, if not of honesty, on the Catholic question, by the distrust or opposition of many of their former supporters. Lord Eldon allowed his tenants to vote for Lord Howick in Northumberland. A cry for Parliamentary Reform was raised even among the Tory constituencies, and the triumphant return of Mr. Brougham for Yorkshire, and Mr. Hume for Middlesex, proved that in the very centres of national wealth and intelligence the boldest views of politics were entertained. Not that the Whigs had proportionably gained; many new men were elected, unpledged to either party, and the future was dark and uncertain.

As the meeting of Parliament drew near, some correspondence took place between Lord Althorp and his friends as to the course they should pursue on the opening of the Session. He wrote the following letter to Mr. Brougham whilst the result of the elections was still imperfectly known :—

"*October 5th*, 1830.

"I shall be in town on the 26th (October), where I conclude I shall find you; we can then discuss the course which ought to be taken. I am inclined to ground our opposition to the Government *mainly, if not entirely*, on their total inefficiency. I think the greatest danger which we run, and the thing most to be avoided, is the giving people an opportunity of saying that we were very moderate and mealy-mouthed as long as there was a chance of the Duke of Wellington taking us in,—but that now we

despair of this we are become violent. We who know the accusation not to be true will not be believed, and it is of importance, therefore, if possible, so to conduct our mode of procedure as not to give a colour to it. I think, with this view, we ought to be cautious how we urge anything against the Ministers which might have been equally well brought forward last Session. I should also be for giving them more credit for the quickness with which they acceded to the wishes of the people in acknowledging Louis Philippe. I think they deserve credit also, it being better to do a thing late than never, for having at last removed Lord O'Neill from the office of Postmaster-General. With respect to the Regency question, I conclude the Duke will propose the Queen as Regent, either with or without a Council. I should prefer the Duchess of Kent, but they are both very well fitted for the office, and, provided they are not either of them to be saddled with a Council, I should not be inclined to run into the trap which in this case will be set, and to give him the popularity with the Queen which his fighting the battle of the Queen against the Duchess of Kent would undoubtedly give him. These are my present views, but I shall be glad to talk them over with you, and to hear what you think about them, being by no means wedded to my own opinion."* 1830. Æt. 48.

The Session opened on the 2nd of November. It had been previously determined by the Whig leaders to raise the question of Parliamentary Reform in each House on the first night's debate. Lord Grey did so with great judgment and the most important results; for he drew forth the Duke of Wellington's celebrated declaration, that he would oppose any change in the present system of Parliamentary representation. In the House of Commons, Lord

Declaration of the Duke of Wellington against Reform.

* Roebuck's Hist. v. i. p. 468.

1830. Æt. 48.

Althorp held the same language as Lord Grey, but with comparatively small effect, for Mr. Brougham had anticipated it earlier in the evening by a speech giving notice of bringing in a Reform Bill on that day fortnight—an announcement which took the party by surprise, and was coldly received. Very different was the feeling shown when Lord Althorp pronounced the Whig declaration of war against the Ministers.

Lord Althorp's speech.

"I feel," said he, "that the country is in a most serious situation, requiring great skill on the part of those to whom its prosperity is entrusted; and because I do feel that great skill is necessary to guide us in our present serious situation, I also feel myself bound to say that His Majesty's present Ministers are not, in my mind, fit and equal to it. I say, individually, that I have not confidence in them; still, if the measures which they shall bring forward be such as I can conscientiously approve of, they shall have my best support without regard to the quarter originating them. I make this declaration for myself, and I believe I may add on the part of those who usually act with me; but, feeling as I do towards the present Ministers, I will add that I should feel strongly disposed to support any measure the tendency of which would be to dispossess them from their places."

The shouts of applause that followed the delivery of these significant words were, however, of no long continuance; and a debate of an ordinary character gave abundant signs of the unwillingness of the majority of the Opposition to identify themselves with the movement party out of doors. The independent members, who were believed to represent

the opinions of large constituencies (except Mr. Brougham and Mr. Hume), sat provokingly silent. It was said, I recollect, that Mr. Brougham's interposition with his notice had disgusted them; as if men in earnest would not have made allowance for the impetuosity of a kindred spirit. Altogether the impression made on Lord Althorp by the night's proceedings was one of deep disappointment. 1830. Æt. 48.

Whilst the course of events in the House was in this state of uncertainty, the Ministers committed the fatal mistake of postponing the King's visit to the City. In this instance the Duke had been misled by Sir Robert Peel, who gave a too ready belief to information from very doubtful authority.* Sir Robert Peel, indeed, believed the country ripe for revolution. He told his tutor, Bishop Lloyd, some months before, that he believed the Monarchy could only last five or six years longer.† Almost every day he found at the Home-Office letters either threatening his life, or putting him on his guard against some dreadful conspiracy; and I was assured when, in 1847, I was Under-Secretary of that Department, that at last he had hardly resolution to open any letters of which the address was at all suspicious. His nature made him liable to panic, though he had abundance of personal courage.

* A City Radical was his informant, whose name was told to me at the time by Lord Granville Somerset, who was then in the Treasury.—AUTHOR.

† This was related to me at the time by the late Mr. John Miller of Lincoln's Inn (the able author of a work on the Statute Law), who heard it from the Bishop himself.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48.

Lord Althorp mentioned to me, as one proof of the effect of the Duke's declaration against Reform, that a few days before the opening of Parliament, not more than twenty members came to the meeting at his rooms in the Albany, whilst more than two hundred attended the following week. The rooms, he said, were crowded almost to suffocation.

The agitation spread rapidly, and the accounts from the large towns and some of the rural districts, of the progress of an insurrectionary spirit beyond the power of the Government to quell, cast a general gloom over London society. It became a common topic of conversation, and gradually drew together men of different politics, who in a common danger were disposed to sink minor differences in forming an administration competent to the charge of the country. The opportunity offered sooner than had been expected, during the discussion of the Civil List on the 15th of November, when Sir Henry Parnell was put forward by Lord Althorp to move an amendment referring the list to a select Committee, and with the assistance of the High Tories, obtained a majority of 29—the numbers being 233 to 204. The Whigs would have been wiser to have treated a vote, necessarily so distasteful to the King, as being less on the merits of the question, than of want of confidence in the Ministers, which was the justification pleaded by the High Tories for taking a course at variance with their general principles, and this appears to have been the dominant feeling of the House; for, although the measure of the

Debate on the Civil List. Defeat of the Ministry.

Government was cast in a liberal spirit, and might have been expected to escape any violent opposition, a very large proportion of the independent members voted against it.* 1830. Æt. 48.

As Lord Althorp walked home with Lord Tavistock after the division, the latter expressed a strong conviction that the next day would see him in office and leader of the House of Commons. Scarcely any idea could have been more unwelcome to him, nor was he ready to believe that whilst so many were eager for the possession of power, it would be pressed on one whose earnest desire was to avoid it. Indeed, apart from other considerations, to reside nearly the whole year in London, subject to the many restraints of office, was a sacrifice which he

* The result of the division took both the Ministry and the Opposition by surprise. There was a large party at Apsley House that night, and Lord Worcester, who was one of the guests, left the table rather abruptly that he might be in time for the division. On his way to the House, he overheard some one saying the division had already taken place, and there was a majority of twenty-nine, which he presumed to be in favour of the ministers. He returned at once with the intelligence, which created no surprise. Shortly afterwards, Mr. Holmes arrived, with the true version, which he communicated to the Duke privately, and nothing was at first mentioned to the guests, so that a lady present went away believing the accuracy of Lord Worcester's report, and on reaching the Princess Lieven's, she soundly rated some inoffensive Whig member for presuming to say that the majority was against the ministry instead of for them. Not that the Duke was unaware of the weakness of his Government, or felt easy at the prospect of a Reform Debate on Mr. Brougham's Notice for the 16th, but he must have known the Notice to have been given without the previous concurrence of the party, so that the arrangements for prosecuting it were still incomplete. He resigned, I suspect, from the conviction that, as the Tories had in large numbers voted against him on such a question as the Civil List, he could no longer calculate on their support. The vote was an unmistakable notice to quit.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48. thought could not reasonably be expected from him. Lord Tavistock, however, urged that in accepting the leadership of the Opposition he had contracted obligations both to his party and his country, of which he could not divest himself without a positive breach of duty, and that to quit his post at the very moment when his services might be most valuable, was out of the question. The discussion lasted to a late hour, as the two friends walked up and down the streets in a cold November night, unable to satisfy each other, and yet unwilling to separate; though Lord Althorp so far felt the weight of Lord Tavistock's* arguments, as to go to rest with very gloomy forebodings.

* No friend stood higher in Lord Althorp's estimation than Lord Tavistock. They had played together in childhood, and when they grew up they lived together as brothers. With many of the same tastes and pursuits, they also entertained the same views of politics. Lord Tavistock told me that he made Lord Althorp a convert to Parliamentary Reform; but their mutual confidence was such as to make it very difficult to say who most influenced the other. Lord Tavistock, however, was one of the oldest Reformers among the Whigs, with whom he had, at one time, the character of going too fast, for he had connected himself with Mr. Whitbread, when the latter broke loose from party ties, and he was often found supporting Sir Francis Burdett. Not that Lord Tavistock acted from any hot impulses, for he was of a thoughtful turn of mind, and remarkable for the soundness and coolness of his judgment. This made him a valuable counsellor, and there could not be a more honest or disinterested one. He entered much into society, and had friends among men of different politics, and so thoroughly did they trust him that, notwithstanding his ultra Whiggism, he had been consulted, at critical periods, both by the Duke of Wellington and Earl Derby. The late lamented Prince Consort was on the most confidential terms with him. He invariably declined office, although Whigs and Tories united in pressing upon him the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, at the death of Lord Bessborough. He had a noble estate, which he managed very ably. It had descended to him frightfully encumbered, with most of the farm-houses dilapidated,

1830.
Æt. 48.

Lord Grey undertakes to form a Government.

These were soon realized, for early the next morning the Duke resigned, and Earl Grey having undertaken to form a Government, agreed with Lord Lansdowne and Lord Holland, whom he had called into council, that nothing could be done without Lord Althorp. He was, therefore, immediately summoned, and had a long interview with Lord Grey alone, the particulars of which might furnish a wholesome lesson to young aspirants for office. Lord Grey was deeply dejected. He had gained the great object of his life, but the prize had been too long deferred, and at his advanced age, and with his disgust at the altered condition of the Whig party since their league with Mr. Canning, he found strong reasons against quitting his retirement at Howick, which of late years he had come thoroughly to enjoy. He said that he should much prefer Lord Althorp being at the head of the Ministry, but the latter replied that on no consideration would he ever accept the place of Prime Minister, for which he felt his utter incapacity. It was with the greatest reluctance that he would entertain the idea of office at

and an impoverished peasantry. At first he thought of shutting up Woburn and living in retirement; but, on reflection, he met his difficulties boldly, and overcame them. His name will long be mentioned with veneration and gratitude in Bedfordshire and Devon, as a just and liberal landlord; and not only farmhouses, but whole villages, all erected by him, attest his wise administration of rural affairs, and especially his attention to the comforts of the poorer classes. No landed proprietor of his day built so many cottages; or had taken greater pains for their improved construction. He married, soon after he came of age, the beautiful Lady Anna Maria Stanhope, a daughter of Lord Harrington, whose death cast a gloom over his latter years. He died in 1861.—AUTHOR.

1830. Æt. 48.

Lord Althorp Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons.

all; but when Lord Grey positively assured him that unless he became Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons, it would be useless to attempt a Whig Government, and the negotiation must be at once abandoned, he could not resist such an appeal, coming as it did from this noble old man, whom he had so long known and admired. He yielded, however, only with the distinct understanidng that, in the event of Lord Grey's retirement, he should not be asked to succeed him.

That Lord Grey was perfectly sincere in his representations to Lord Althorp, is proved by the fact that four years afterwards he broke up his Government on finding that Lord Althorp declined to remain in it, although he was then on a most satisfactory footing with the Canningites; whereas in 1830 he not only distrusted and disliked them, but regarded them as aiming at an undue ascendency in the Government. Lord Palmerston the same afternoon actually proposed himself to Lord Grey for the leadership; but on the mere intimation that the post was reserved for Lord Althorp, he expressed himself perfectly satisfied. In the exhausted state of the party, no other Whig could be named for whom Lord Palmerston could have been expected to waive his pretensions.*

Lord Grey told Lord Althorp that the Govern-

* Lord Palmerston told this on the same day to Lord Hatherton, by whom it was related to me. Lord Melbourne afterwards told me that without the Canningites it would have been impossible for the Whigs to form a Government; and the value of such an accession of strength, without any sacrifice of principle on either side, ought to be borne in mind.—AUTHOR.

ment, to be strong, must be a comprehensive one, or, in other words, a coalition, with Parliamentary Reform as its basis. On this principle he invited the Duke of Richmond and Sir Edward Knatchbull, two of the most eminent among the High Tories, into his Cabinet; their approval of Parliamentary Reform, and their recent intercourse with the Whigs in opposition, being considered sufficient to justify their entering the Government without any dereliction of honour. A far more questionable proceeding was his attempt to retain the Tory Lord Chancellor. To what extent his negotiation went with Lord Lyndhurst is not authentically known, but the Great Seal remained several days in abeyance, during which interval the offer of the Attorney-Generalship was made to Mr. Brougham, who indignantly rejected it, not choosing to hold any subordinate place in the Government. Lord Grey then thought of making him Master of the Rolls, and asked Lord Althorp's opinion on the subject, when Lord Althorp simply answered: "If Brougham is left in Parliament with an irremovable office, the Ministry will not last three months, and I certainly will not belong to it." This seems to have been conclusive, for an immediate offer of the Great Seal was made to Mr. Brougham; and in the choice between him and Lord Lyndhurst for the office of Lord Chancellor, in a Whig Government, it is extraordinary that there should have been any hesitation.*

1830. Æt. 48.

Ministerial appointments.

* Like Burke, Mr. Brougham was not justly appreciated by his

1830. Æt. 48.

The Irish appointments were, by a great mistake, left entirely to Lord Anglesey, as the Lord Lieutenant, and being, as I was told by those who knew him best, then very little of a politician, he consulted only his personal likings and dislikings, which caused his preference to be given exclusively to the Tories of the Peel school, able and enlightened men cer-

party. There is much truth in Mr. Roebuck's remarks on this subject (History, v. i., p. 460). Defects of temper and manner, if not of judgment (very provoking no doubt), might be fairly urged against him, which sometimes turned to the advantage of the Tories; but on the great questions which constituted the strength of the party, such as Law Reform, Negro Emancipation, and general Education, he really had no competitors on either side of the House. Hence, with the public, who knew him best by his advocacy of these measures and his eloquence in Parliament and at the bar, he enjoyed a degree of popularity which in political circles was scarcely understood. This he maintained by an immense correspondence with persons of all classes who were in pursuit of the same objects. The letters he received daily, at the time of his accepting the Great Seal, averaged about two hundred; and, notwithstanding the pressure of his manifold engagements, he seldom failed to give a full answer to every one. He once observed, when in opposition, that he had lived to see power no longer united with place; and it was feared by many of his friends that he would himself be an instance of the truth of the observation. Mr. John Allen, amongst others, strongly recommended him to refuse the Great Seal, and his venerable mother, one of the most excellent women I have ever known, was of the same opinion. She said to him (he wrote to Lord Althorp), "You have no rank, no fortune, no family influence; you are feared for your weight in the House of Commons and in the country, and you are secure as long as you remain there. But those of whom you think yourself sure as followers now, will soon show a different face when you are a Lord." "She was of all women," Lord Brougham observed, "the most gentle and most charitable, and never suspicious or thinking ill of any one; but her extreme affection for me inspired her with fears and with a prophetic knowledge! Her prediction was verified from Nov. 1834 to April 1835." Mr. Allen told me that Lord Brougham, in this instance, acted on the advice of his friend Lord Denman. It must be admitted, however, that *Lord* Brougham proved often not less trying to his political associates than *Mr.* Brougham had been.—AUTHOR.

tainly, but naturally odious to the Catholic party, with whom they had been, except for the last year, always at variance. It was not even a question among the Whig leaders to give office to Mr. O'Connell or his friends, so imperfectly had the Emancipation Act been practically acted upon. Perhaps, with the strong anti-Catholic feeling throughout England, this would have been impossible; but he ought at least to have been consulted, and the slight thus cast on him extinguished in a single hour his gratitude for all that the Whigs had done and suffered for his countrymen. 1830. Æt. 48.

The minor offices were, for the most part, filled up by Lord Grey, with an occasional reference to his colleagues—the persons he most consulted were Lord Lansdowne and Lord Holland, both too good-natured to form impartial estimates of the qualifications of the various candidates. The only instance in which Lord Althorp actually interfered on these occasions, was to press the nomination of Mr. Poulett Thomson* to the Board of Trade; an

* The Tories were much wiser when, some years after, they made Mr. Alexander Baring the President, with a Peerage, as the Whigs ought to have done, Mr. Baring being then in the very highest repute as a merchant, a good speaker, and a warm friend of the party. The distrust he occasionally showed of Free Trade would soon have yielded to the influences which of late years have imperceptibly brought all holders of office in that Board to support Free Trade. In point of talent, as well as information, he was immeasurably superior to Lord Auckland. The latter, however, had good sense, honesty, and assiduity, and was highly esteemed, but the real business of the department he judiciously left to Mr. Poulett Thomson. His appointment was, at the time, severely criticised. Subsequently, Mr. P. Thomson (according to his own account to me) threatened to resign, if not placed at the head of the Board, and this helped Lord Auckland to the Admiralty, where

1830. Æt. 48.

appointment which, owing to Lord Grey's slight knowledge of Mr. Poulett Thomson, might otherwise not have taken place, and it was of more importance, as Lord Auckland, whom the friendship of Lord Lansdowne had made President, knew nothing of trade. Lord Althorp also departed from his usual reserve to express his warm approval of the nomination of Mr. Francis Baring to a seat at the Treasury, which had been recommended by Lord Lansdowne. It was not merely to please Lord Spencer, or Lord Althorp, but from a just sense of professional merit, that Sir Robert Spencer was placed at the Ordnance as Surveyor General. Several of the nominations were condemned as of too aristocratic a character, and the Whigs were charged with repeating the fault often ascribed to them before, of distributing their patronage exclusively among a few great families. This complaint was raised even to the construction of the Cabinet. Lord Althorp's appointment alone seemed to give universal satisfaction. His qualifications as a Finance Minister were regarded as not inferior to those of his immediate predecessors, whilst the authority he had acquired over his party in opposition gave an earnest of his success as a Leader of the House. One person, however, entertained a very different opinion, and this was Lord Althorp himself. He felt, not without reason, that to enter on

his administration gained him considerable credit. He had a difficulty in speaking in public, which made him almost useless in the Lords, but in society he could be very agreeable.—AUTHOR.

the duties of such a post as Chancellor of the Exchequer in middle life and without official training, was a most hazardous experiment, and required abilities far beyond the estimate he formed of his own. Painfully conscious of his want of eloquence, he had also to contend with an almost invincible shyness, which he said would be equally to his disadvantage as a Ministerial leader; besides, he had no ambition, and no pleasure even in the excitement of office; and yet he was destined to obtain an almost unparalleled influence in the House, and to be one of the chief instruments of Providence in carrying the country safely through what may truly be called a social Revolution. 1830. Æt. 48.

Lord Althorp was again returned for Northamptonshire without opposition, and it is recorded in Hansard* that on his first rising to speak in his new character the most profound silence prevailed, and after he had given notice of a Select Committee to consider the reductions that would be made in the salaries of the members of the Government, he "sat down amidst vehement and reiterated cheers, which for a long time resounded through the House." These were intended more for the man than for the measure he announced. Such marks of respect and favour, be it observed, are not mentioned by Hansard as having been shown to any of Lord Althorp's predecessors on any similar occasion. Lord Althorp returned for Northamptonshire without opposition.

Whilst these congratulatory shouts were still Death of Sir Robert Spencer.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third Ser., v. i. p. 797.

1830. Æt. 48. almost ringing in his ears, he received a communication from the Admiralty which threw him into deep affliction. His brother, Sir Robert Spencer, then captain of the Magicienne, had died of an internal complaint off Alexandria, on the 4th of November, after only a few hours' illness.* Sir Robert's powerful frame and vigorous health had promised a long life, and his death at the very time that Lord Althorp was looking forward to having him by his side as a companion and counsellor, was a misfortune that admitted of no human consolation. It pressed on him the more heavily from the fact, that his younger brother, the Rev. George Spencer, had a short time before become a Roman Catholic, and they were naturally much estranged from each other in consequence, so that Lord Althorp felt as if he had lost two brothers. I recollect his telling me with great emotion, that George had passed through London without making any attempt to see him.†

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Since the preceding sheet was printed I have, through the kindness of the present Earl Grey, seen a statement, under Lord Althorp's own hand, of the conditions on which the party that met at his

* Sir Robert Spencer had been for some time subject to inflammatory attacks. It appears, from the surgeon's report, now before me, that he was taken ill at seven o'clock, on the evening of the 3rd, and, notwithstanding every effort that could be made to save him, he sank on the following morning at half-past nine.—AUTHOR.

† I have pleasure in adding, that in time the coldness which existed between Lord Spencer and his brother gradually yielded to their natural feelings of affection, and that Father Ignatius, in retiring from the world, did not cease to maintain a deep interest in his family. —AUTHOR.

rooms agreed to act together in Parliament. It is in a letter from Lord Althorp to Earl Grey, and would alone be strong evidence of the patriotic feeling of them both. 1830. Æt. 48.

"My dear Lord,

"I think it right to tell you that a certain number of members of the House of Commons, much the largest part of whom were members of the old Opposition, have agreed to act together for the purpose of enforcing retrenchment and a reduction of taxes upon the Ministers, but without intending thereby to act in hostility to them, with a view to their removal from office; and they have decided to put me forward as their organ. The number at present amounts just to 40. The principle of our junction is that it is to extend only to measures of retrenchment and reduction of taxes. On all other points we are to continue as much disunited as ever. We have determined not on any pretence to hold any intercourse with the Tory or Canning party previous to measures being brought forward, but to support anything brought forward by either of those parties with perfect cordiality, if it comes within the principle of our union. I am to take occasion to state this determination on our part as early as may be, and before Goulburn brings forward his budget, in the hope—a vain one I fear—that it may have some influence on the proposals which he is to make. I dare say Howick has already given you this information. I could not do so till to-day, because there was so much variety of opinion in our meeting on Wednesday, that I almost expected that the result of to-day would be to dissolve it; but to-day there was less difference of opinion, and I now hope that some good may be effected.

"Believe me, my dear Lord,

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"Albany, *March 6th*, 1830."

1830. Æt. 48.

NOTE.—One of the first acts of Lord Brougham, on his appointment, was to nominate me as Principal Secretary to the Lord Chancellor. This I owed to the recommendation of his youngest brother, Mr. William Brougham, an old friend at the University—for I was almost a stranger to Lord Brougham, having only met him once before in consultation when I was his junior counsel. I must add that he then made a most favourable impression on me, for besides his superior abilities, he was, unlike many of the leading counsel, always most kind and considerate towards his juniors. Nor was he changed in this respect by his elevation to office, although he must have been tried by the homage at first paid to him. On the day he took his seat on the Woolsack at Westminster, Prince Leopold, the Dukes of Sussex, Gloucester, and Devonshire, and many noblemen and foreign ambassadors, attended to do him honour. The gallery and court were crowded with spectators, and the oldest lawyers admitted that there was no instance on record of such an assemblage on a similar occasion.—AUTHOR.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT.—THE CIVIL LIST.—THE BUDGET.—STATE OF IRELAND.

1830–31. Æt. 48-49.

THE House of Commons had adjourned, on the 20th of December, till the 3rd of February, and though the Tories grumbled at the length of the Recess, Lord Althorp found the term short for preparing the financial measures with which the Session was to be opened. The public, besides remembering the constant cry of the Whigs, when in opposition, for lower estimates, had laid great stress on some expressions in Lord Grey's impressive speech on taking office, in which retrenchment was coupled with peace and Parliamentary Reform as one of the main objects of the new Government, and Lord Althorp saw with dismay the growing popularity of himself and his colleagues from anticipated reductions in the public expenditure and taxation which he had never contemplated, and felt that no Minister could carry into effect. It was not as if the Whigs had succeeded an improvident Ministry. Economy, as Lord Althorp repeatedly acknowledged, was one of the chief merits of the Duke's administration, and had been carried so far

Lord Althorp's plan of the settlement of the Civil List.

1831. Æt. 49. as to give some plausibility to a complaint his Grace once made, that the real cause of his downfall was not Catholic Emancipation, but the sacrifice of patronage,* and the Whigs had come into office just as the mine from which their predecessors had drawn such rich materials was completely worked out.

At the opening of Parliament, Lord Althorp excited general interest by giving notice of the promised Reform Bill for the 1st of March.

On the fourth day of the Session he brought forward his plan of the settlement of the Civil List. It could not be otherwise than an unsatisfactory measure, bearing as it did the stamp of concession, and it was wrung from Lord Althorp by the necessity of propitiating the King at that important crisis in the public affairs. His Majesty was neither an enlightened nor a strong-minded man; and he yielded easily to the importunities of the Court. He made the maintenance of the pensions a *sine quâ non* with the Ministers, and expressed great alarm lest the proposed reform should interfere with his comforts and dignity. A liberal Civil List was the only expedient for allaying his prejudices and removing his fears. Accordingly, the Estimates proposed by the Tories were not materially reduced, but provision was made for the future

* This, indeed, had lost him many mercenary partisans, who, however, never could have supported him against the immense combination of persons throughout the country calling for organic changes in the constitution, such as the Tories had always deprecated, and could not propose without an utter loss of character.—AUTHOR.

limiting of the pension list; and what is far more important, the diplomatic salaries and allowances, a fertile source of corruption,* were thrown on the Consolidated Fund, so that it became less difficult to prevent their afterwards coming under the supervision of Parliament. Such very moderate amendments of the Tory measure, after the language held by the Whigs in the former debate, fairly called forth the taunts of the Opposition. Murmurs were heard in the Ministerial ranks, but the only censures of which the Government could complain were made by Sir Henry Parnell† and Mr. Robert Gordon, two disappointed candidates for office, whose motives were too open to suspicion for their speeches to have any very injurious effect. 1831. Æt. 49.

Dissatisfaction of the Whigs.

After the debate, however, the mortification of the Whigs showed itself still more strongly both in expostulations with members of the Government

* Many instances might be cited of young members of noble families being employed on foreign missions merely with a view to obtain the retiring pension.—AUTHOR.

† It is due to Lord Grey to state that Sir Henry Parnell was not overlooked in the formation of the Government: an appointment was offered to him, but he refused it as beneath his pretensions. These seemed to many of the party rather extravagant. Though a perspicuous and effective writer, he was a tedious speaker, and, except on questions of finance, could seldom make any impression on the House. His voice was unfortunately thin and weak: defects not redeemed by any vivacity of expression, for he had little of the Irishman about him. His knowledge was not considered practical; and I recollect that, after all his elaborate criticism on the Army Estimates, he did nothing whilst he was Secretary at War besides drawing up sketches of reforms which were too superficial and imperfect to be of any service. This was told me by his successor, Sir John Hobhouse. Financial knowledge was his principal recommendation. His integrity, personal and political, was beyond question, and so was his industry, but he had not the qualifications for a leader.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

and in the public journals, so that the Lord Chancellor wrote to Lord Althorp, recommending the pensions to be given up, but without effect. Lord Althorp replied that he had made up his mind on the subject, and was perfectly ready to resign; but whilst he held office, he would act as he thought right. This firmness, which some called obstinacy, served to show his weight in the House. Francis Jeffrey, then a new member, says of him, in a letter written during the discussion,* "There is something to me quite delightful in his calm, clumsy, courageous, immutable probity and well-meaning, and it seems to have a charm with everybody." No one, observes Lord Cockburn, seems to have struck Jeffrey with so much admiration as Lord Althorp.

The Budget.

A general impression prevailed among the friends of the Government that the Budget would redeem the defects of the Civil List, and vague rumours of most important financial reforms having been prepared by Lord Althorp met with ready belief. Congratulations were offered beforehand to Lady Spencer on her son's approaching success; and she accepted them, saying, in her way, "Jack was always skilful in figures, and his work is so much to his taste, that I am sure he will do himself credit."

These hopes rested on a very sandy foundation, for as the Estimates, owing to the warlike aspect of the Continent, could not be materially reduced,

* Cockburn's Memoirs of Jeffrey, v. i. p. 322.

the sum required for the public service would necessarily be in amount the same as before, and the only possible saving or relief that could be afforded by the Government, was by altering the mode in which the revenue was to be raised, a step which had been strongly discountenanced by a large majority of the House only a year before; and it remained to be seen whether the scheme then defeated could be so far revised as to propitiate the various interests which had been successfully arrayed against it. 1831. Æt. 49.

Lord Althorp proposed to lower or repeal the heavy duties on tobacco, glass, printed calicoes, candles, coals, timber, &c., and to make up the deficiency in the revenue consequent on these large reductions chiefly by direct taxation, his object being to shift the public burdens more on the wealthier classes, to give wider scope to commercial enterprise, and to promote the increased employment of the people. Huskisson had long entertained the same idea, but wanted courage or opportunity to act on it.* Peel, after an interval of ten years, was able in more favourable times to give it effect. Like Peel, Lord Althorp preferred an Income Tax to all other direct taxes, but

* This was the opinion of many of the Free-Traders, and is in some degree confirmed by Mr. Huskisson's speech on Mr. Poulett Thomson's motion, in March, 1830. He was at the time in such declining health, as made him fearful of proceeding with reforms likely to be warmly opposed. He looked feeble and sickly. Indeed his constitution was broken down by years of unintermitting exertions in the public service. The catastrophe which caused his death probably did not materially shorten his life.—AUTHOR.

1831. ÆT. 49. he stood alone in the Cabinet in this opinion, and as the best alternative, he resorted to a tax on the transfer of real and funded property, with the view of bringing the funds within the list of contributories to the public revenue. He had satisfied himself, from a careful examination of the Loan Acts, that this would not be a breach of any public engagement, and he honestly regarded it as a more equitable distribution of taxation, for he shared the opinion generally entertained that the fundholders not only enjoyed an unfair immunity in this respect, but that their interests had been highly favoured in the adjustment of the currency. Many persons of great consideration openly maintained that the dividends could not be paid for any length of time at the existing rate of interest, and such invidious comparisons were made between fundholders and other capitalists* that the imposition of a light tax, the effect of which would be to place them all on the same footing, seemed likely, in the removal of a just ground of complaint, to impart additional strength to the public credit. Sir James Graham and Mr. Poulett Thomson, although often differing on financial questions, agreed that this would be the case. Even Mr. Horsley Palmer, a Tory, the deputy-governor of the Bank of England, and a great authority on such points in the City,

* "The merchant and manufacturer as well as the landowner are the producers, the mortgagee and the fundholder the sluggards. Every tax on the former is a tax on industry and capital accumulated, every tax on the latter is a tax on indolence and capital hoarded."—Sir James Graham's "Corn and Currency," p. 106.

when made acquainted with Lord Althorp's intention, only observed, "It will not be relished, but it will be borne." The measure met with the warm approval of the Cabinet,* and was looked on as eminently calculated to restore the waning popularity of the Government. 1831. Æt. 49.

On Friday (the 11th of February) Lord Althorp brought his Budget before the House.† To say nothing of the reduction of two hundred and sixty offices,—many highly paid and all unnecessary, which he noticed only as evidence that the nation would not henceforward be governed by patronage, —it unquestionably contained some most valuable provisions. In the proposed repeal of the duties on coals, glass, tallow-candles, and printed cottons, not only were the industrial classes essentially relieved, but a large waste of revenue was stopped. The duty on printed cottons, for instance, drew nearly 2,000,000*l.* from the public, and yet yielded but 500,000*l.* to the Exchequer. As many as one hundred and sixty-three petty duties, of which the return bore no proportion to their mischievous interference with trade, were likewise repealed. The high duties on tobacco and on newspapers and advertisements, which had gone beyond the point when revenue keeps pace with taxation, were reduced one half, under the belief that the revenue would eventually be a gainer by the change, which,

* I recollect Lord Brougham some time afterwards saying, that he and Lord Lansdowne had opposed the tax in the Cabinet, but were overruled.—AUTHOR.

† Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third Ser., v. ii., p. 403.

1831. Æt. 49.

although it might not bear so directly on the wants of the people, was still materially conducive to their enjoyments and interests. Although the amount of taxation reduced was estimated at about 4,000,000*l.*, yet the sum for which it was necessary to provide, allowing for the saving in the expense of collection and the expected increase from the reduced duties, did not exceed 3,000,000*l.*

Thus far all was bright in Lord Althorp's arrangements. That in this selection of duties to be repealed he had fixed on those most incompatible with the progress of national prosperity, few statesmen would now venture to dispute. In taking his next step—the imposition of additional duties—he had satisfied himself that the objections attached to the duties he proposed to take off could not be raised against those he proposed to lay on; and it will be seen from the list below* that he was

* Duties Repealed.

| | |
|---|---|
| Tobacco (one-half) | £1,400,000 |
| Newspaper Stamps (one-half) | 190,000 |
| Coals and Slates | 830,000 |
| Candles | 420,000 |
| Printed Cottons | 500,000 |
| Glass | 600,000 |
| Auction Duty on Land | 60,000 |
| Miscellaneous | 80,000 |
| | £4,080,000 |

Duties Imposed.

| | |
|---|---|
| Equalization of Wine Duties | £240,000 |
| Regulation of Timber Duties | 600,000 |
| On Raw Cotton | 500,000 |
| Export of Coals | 100,000 |
| Passengers in Steam Vessels | 100,000 |
| Tax on Transfers | 1,200,000 |
| | £2,740,000 |

governed by the same sound principles of political economy in the latter case as in the former. The only exception is the duty on raw cotton, which he reluctantly adopted as an equivalent for the duty on printed cottons,* and it was so successful in its results as almost to justify the error, for such it cannot be denied to have been, especially in a Budget of this character. 1831. ÆT. 49.

In the two principal articles of his new tariff, the modification of the wine and timber duties, the revenue would not be drawn from the consumer, but from great protected interests, which were profiting at the expense of the community; and, as he here followed the example set by Mr. Huskisson, he counted (rather hastily) on the acquiescence of the leading members of the late Ministry. It may be observed of his remaining duties, that the export duty on coals was sanctioned by the recommendations of Mr. Burke and Mr. Ricardo, and he considered the duty on transfers to have the still higher authority of Mr. Pitt in the precedent supplied by the income-tax. Moreover, from his knowledge of the opinions of country gentlemen in the House, he had reason to believe that the transfer duty would be so popular with them as to carry all the other duties.

His estimate of the revenue for the year amounted to about 500,000*l.* beyond the expenditure. More

* The duty on raw cotton was little felt in the increased prosperity of the trade. Sir Robert Peel did not include it in his list of repealed duties in 1841. It remained till the following year.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

he did not require; for it was another innovation in his plan of finance that any large surplus of revenue should be applied to reduce taxation, instead of going, according to the recommendation of finance committees and the opinion but not the practice of the preceding Government, in liquidation of the national debt. The doctrine has more of boldness than prudence in it, but has since been sanctioned by great names.

It was a great effort to Lord Althorp to deal with a plan so complicated and comprehensive, involving disputed principles, and the necessity of making long details. His speech was certainly not an artistic performance. No one who knew him expected it to be so. Mr. Roebuck (whose work is a record of every defect that can be imputed to Whig statesmen) describes it, not altogether untruly, as "confused, evincing a want of practice in the business and routine of office,"* as well as a poverty of diction. But with these faults there must have been some countervailing merits, for I was in the House during nearly the whole of the debate, without hearing a word of condemnation of the manner in which Lord Althorp had acquitted himself. It is admitted even by Mr. Roebuck that he laid down the just principles of taxation with clearness and precision, and for every change he seldom failed to give an excellent reason. His statement, though devoid of elegance, was perfectly intelligible. He went through his calculations without committing

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 49.

any blunders, and his explanations left no doubt of what he intended: a merit which the persons most affected by the Budget so often miss in financial speeches of much higher pretensions. His main object in the commutation of duties being the relief of the lower classes, he plainly asked the House whether this end could have been gained by any other plan. "Is it possible," he said, "to take off the taxes which are supposed to press directly and particularly upon them? I maintain that it is not, because they consume few taxable commodities. The best mode of relieving them is by giving them employment; and this only can be secured by reducing the taxes which most interfere with manufacturing industry." He might have added the happy illustration, from a work by one of his colleagues: "Cut the cords, the balloon rises of itself; lighten the taxes which oppress trade and navigation, they will thrive at once and enrich the people."* 1831. Æt. 49.

The House listened with complacency to the enumeration and defence of several of his new duties, in the general eagerness to learn how the great vacuum still left in the revenue was to be filled up. This Lord Althorp kept back till the last. When he announced the tax on the transfer of funded property, the bursts of applause from both Whig and Tory benches seemed conclusive as to its reception. He cited the income-tax as the precedent on which he acted, and his reasoning

* Sir James Graham's "Corn and Currency."

1831. Æt. 49. apparently met with general acquiescence. There was not even a whisper of dissent, and he sat down amidst loud and long-continued cheers. Sir James Graham, who had waited for the close of his speech, then left the House, considering his success to be complete. *†

A pause followed, shorter than usually happens at the close of the financial statement; and then, before any of the country gentlemen could vent their feelings in favour of the transfer duty, a few sentences from Mr. Goulburn gave the unexpected and unwelcome notice of the hostile tactics of the ex-Ministers. It had been already determined amongst them to give the Budget no quarter. Partly from a conviction of its unsoundness, and partly, it may be not uncharitably presumed, from a natural wish to inflict a signal disaster on the Government, they were prepared to assail the measure in all its parts with the whole strength of their staff. Their first and hardest blow was aimed at the transfer duty. They argued—and

* Sir James, happening to meet a friend as he quitted the House, called out, "Make haste, and hear the cheers of the country gentlemen for Althorp's speech."—AUTHOR.

† I was present and took much interest in the debate on the Budget, and my recollection of the manner in which the proposal to tax the transfer of funded property was received, is that it was by no means favourable. I remember that Mr. John Smith (the banker) rose early in the debate from behind the Treasury Bench and denounced the tax in strong terms as a violation of principle. I also remember that he was loudly cheered by some steady supporters of the Government, amongst whom was myself. Strongly disapproving of the tax on principle, and feeling certain at that time it could not be carried, we were anxious to take the first opportunity of warning the Government they would have to withdraw it.—LORD BELPER.

very ably too—that, by an express provision in all the Loan Acts, funded property was exempted from any tax whatever, and that to violate the condition on which the public creditor had advanced his money would be both contrary to every principle of justice and fair dealing, and utterly subversive of the public credit. They denied the income-tax to be a precedent in point, for it comprised all the property in the country, and was not levelled at the Funds alone. They also endeavoured to show that the tax would not be less oppressive than unjust, from its effect on the common loan transactions on the Exchange, and that it would interfere not only with the value of funded securities, but of every species of mercantile security in the country. "But the question," said Sir Robert Peel, "is not one of policy or prudence—it is a question of morality." "A more flagrant breach of public faith," added Sir Edward Sugden, "had not been committed in France during the Revolution." No part of the Budget was allowed to pass unblamed. Even the intended remission of duties only provoked Sir Robert Peel to depreciate the principles of free-trade; he went so far as to say that he knew, from experience, that with respect to several articles on which duties had been reduced, the benefit of the reduction was enjoyed by the dealers, and that the price of the commodities did not decrease in proportion to the remission of the duty. Mr. Goulburn, in still stronger language, sneered at the repeal of the duty on printed cottons as affecting

1831. Æt. 49.

1831. Æt. 49.

"only one garment of the poor," and presenting paltry compensation for the duty on raw cotton. The alteration of the wine and timber duties came in for still more severe condemnation. Protection was upheld as indispensable to the maintenance of the Cape wine trade and to the supply of Canada timber, an interruption of which Sir Robert Peel earnestly deprecated as a serious check to the productive interests of the country.

These arguments derived additional weight from an unfortunate blunder of the Ministers. Instead of rising at once to remove the impression made by Mr. Goulburn's charges of breach of faith and incapacity, they actually allowed five speeches, including Sir Robert Peel's, which exhausted the case against them, to tear the Budget to pieces, before they entered on its defence. Mr. Poulett Thomson, Lord Howick, and others, were ready to speak, but Lord Althorp repressed them, in the expectation of aid from below the gangway. None however came for the country gentlemen interpreted the silence of the Ministers into an admission of weakness, and were positively frightened into the belief that the transfer duty must be given up. They maintained a cold neutrality, evidently much disappointed at the turn the debate had taken, and shrinking from any share in it. Even the Whigs lost heart and hope. At length, after some hours of fruitless delay, Lord Althorp rose in reply, and his defence was so clear and straightforward, that if delivered earlier in the evening, it might have been effective. He was soon

followed by Mr. Charles Grant,* who spoke very well, but without the earnestness or authority which at the moment was so much wanted. They argued that the words of the Loan Acts were as strong against an income-tax as against a transfer duty, and they cited the defence of that measure by Mr. Pitt,† when he confirmed the exemption enjoyed by the fundholders from taxes expressly levelled at them as annuitants of the public. No such pretence could, they observed, be set up in this instance by the fundholders, since every description of property was subject to a similar duty. "When funded property received the same protection from the State," said Lord Althorp, "as any other description of property, it is no more than just that it should equally contribute to the defence of the State." There had been a general acquiescence in the right of the Government to impose the income-tax, and no stain had attached to Mr. Pitt's memory in consequence.

1831. Æt. 49.

It was too late; men's minds had been made up, and no argument could move them. They hardly listened to some of the Whig county members, who late in the evening were prevailed upon to speak for the Government, and the triumph of the Opposition was complete.

The next morning there was a perfect uproar in the City. The spirit of Protection, then so strong among the commercial classes, had been thoroughly

* Sir James Graham remained silent, and his backwardness on such an occasion was very discouraging.—AUTHOR.

† Hansard's Parl. Hist., v. xxiv. p. 14.

1831. Æt. 49.

roused, and what was still more alarming, the moneyed interests, especially the bankers and brokers, took fright at the transfer duty, and without distinction of party united to oppose it. Mr. Andrew Thomson, a decided Liberal, the Governor of the Bank, was reported to have said of Mr. Poulett Thomson, "brother or no brother, we are enemies in future." There seemed an amazing unanimity of feeling on the subject, and strong representations were addressed to the Ministers accordingly. The Cabinet met, and after long consultation they yielded to the cry; not, however, without a strenuous opposition from Lord Althorp, who maintained that if time were given for the Budget to be understood through the country, there would be a reaction in its favour, —and he may have been right, for notwithstanding the predictions of the alarmists, the funds did not fall, and both among the manufacturing and the agricultural interests it afterwards proved that the measure would have had many supporters.* At length Lord Althorp said that if he could not pre-

* This was especially the case in the manufacturing districts, where the Budget, altered as it was, proved most useful. I copy from an able contemporary writer the following testimony to the value of one of its provisions:—"The repeal of the duty has been highly beneficial, having given a stimulus both to production and improvement. To the consumer it is a great relief, especially to the poor, as a woman may now buy a useful, respectable printed dress for half-a-crown, which before the repeal would have cost four shillings; indeed a printed dress, of good materials and neat pattern, with fast colours, may now be bought for two shillings. The tax was virtually one of 70 or 80 per cent."—Baines's History of the Cotton Manufacture, p. 285.—AUTHOR.

The repeal of the duty on candles gave less satisfaction than was

pare a Budget, he was not fit for his place, and it was with very great difficulty that he was prevailed upon to remain in office. 1831. Æt. 49.

On bringing up the Report on the Budget, Lord Althorp announced that the transfer duties would be abandoned. He was not unreasonably taunted by the Opposition for having proposed them. He was obliged in consequence to give up his remission of the duties on glass and tobacco; but he persisted in pressing his regulation of the wine and timber duties. The former he carried, notwithstanding a violent opposition; the fate of the latter was for some time doubtful. The colonial and agricultural interests made a formidable combination against it. They urged that a rise in the price of Canadian timber would more than outweigh the benefit to be expected from the admission of Norwegian timber, and Lord Althorp, rather than give up what he knew to be a national benefit, abandoned the Canadian duty, and limited his measure to a partial reduction of the prohibitory duty on Norwegian timber. This concession, however, failed to satisfy the Protectionists, and Sir Robert Peel joined them, evidently with great reluctance, in defeating the measure. Mr. Courtenay, the former Vice-President of the Board of Trade, was the only Tory who, Abandonment of the transfer duties.

expected. The dealers in candles naturally protested against it, as an absolute loss to them, for it appeared that they derived a profit on the duty—of course to the loss of the public. This led Mr. Alexander Baring to observe, that Ministers ought to be especially cautious how they imposed duties, when it became a grievance to take them off.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

to his great honour, voted with Ministers in the minority. I was assured by Mr. Poulett Thomson that he had ascertained from information in the department that a similar remission of duty had been contemplated by the late Government.

These curtailments of the Budget, as they damaged the credit of the Ministers, proportionately raised the hopes of the Opposition. The latter now talked of an early return to power, some of them, however, regretting that they should be so soon wanted, as they would prefer being out long enough to be more seriously missed. Comparisons were made between Mr. Goulburn's last Budget (of 1830) and Lord Althorp's, and the great reduction of taxes made by the former was invidiously pointed out; but it was carefully kept out of view that if Mr. Goulburn had remained in office, his Budget for 1831 would have presented a painful contrast to that of 1830, for in none of the public departments were any traces to be found of intended reduction of establishments by the late Government, nor were any mentioned in subsequent debates as having been intended, and it follows that there could have been no reduction of taxation. The day at length arrived when Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Goulburn submitted to Parliament a Budget agreeing closely in principle with the Budget of 1831, and they had then to answer some of the very objections which they now pertinaciously urged. Lord Althorp has the merit of being the first statesman whose Budget reduced to practice the theory both of Free

Trade and of the commutation of duties—his error lay in supposing that a measure of which no essential part could escape violent opposition from one section or other of the House, and must depend on the support of his political adversaries, would be carried by a Government commanding at best a very narrow majority. In the hands of Mr. Pitt the Budget, with some emendations, might have succeeded, and brought credit on its promoters; but it was a most rash undertaking for the Whigs, and they nearly sank under the failure.* 1831. Æt. 49.

Another serious disappointment at this time to the Ministers was the state of Ireland. The sister country had become one of the difficulties of the Whigs, as it had been previously of the Tories, and Mr. O'Connell employed all his skill in agitation to rekindle the flames which had apparently been extinguished by the Emancipation Act. With the lower classes he had his usual success; but the courage of Lord Anglesey and Mr. Stanley, which was greater than his own, soon arrested his progress; and he received no countenance from the Catholic gentry. The Ministers indicted him for having held public meetings in violation of the Lord-Lieutenant's proclamation; and after various ingenious devices he pleaded guilty. The sincerity of the Ministers in these proceedings was questioned at the time, but, as will appear from the following State of Ireland.

* My account of this Budget is taken principally from my diary, drawn up at the time, the correctness of which was confirmed to me by Lord Althorp some years afterwards.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49. passages in Lord Althorp's letters to Lord Spencer, without the slightest foundation :—

"Jan. 14th, 1831. The state of Ireland is getting as bad as possible. I am afraid we shall be forced to adopt some very violent measures when Parliament meets. But O'Connell must be put down, whatever may be the means necessary to put him down."

"Jan. 22nd. The conferences about Belgium are very troublesome; they work Palmerston hard, but he is showing great ability in the negotiation, and I hope the matter will end advantageously for England. I cannot say that I am as well satisfied with what is doing in Ireland. Notwithstanding the unanimous opinion of our law authorities there, I entertain some doubts of the legality of O'Connell's arrest. If it should prove illegal I suppose we must strike our colours, which, to me at least, will be a most agreeable result; for, although we might fairly throw the blame where it is due, yet as our law appointments are already censured by many, and perhaps approved by none very much, we shall be considered responsible for any blunders they may have made. It will be a very favourable point to be turned out upon: 1st, because in real truth we are not to be blamed, though legally and constitutionally we may be; and, 2nd, because the people of England can hardly be angry with us for having gone, perhaps, a little too far in resisting him. If I am once turned out, they will have some difficulty in catching me again."

Law Reform.

The Lord Chancellor alone escaped the censure which, deservedly or undeservedly, was cast on his colleagues. His administration of the Court of Chancery, and his advocacy of law reforms, not only realised the expectations founded on his previous

character, but were of essential service to the Government.* 1831. Æt. 49.

* Extract from my MS. Diary.—23rd Feb., 1831.—"The Lord Chancellor brought forward his long-promised motion on the Court of Chancery. Notwithstanding the dryness of the subject and his own imperfect knowledge of it, he contrived to make a most interesting and impressive speech, and to lead all who heard him to believe that the Augean stable, which had baffled the knowledge of Eldon and the abilities of Lyndhurst, was at last to be cleansed, and the public were to be blessed with good law, cheaply and expeditiously administered. None of the peers cheered the Chancellor more cordially than the Duke of Wellington, who had come from Deal purposely to hear the speech, and who had told my friend, General Alava, that he had done all he could to prevail on Lyndhurst to undertake Chancery Reform, but Lyndhurst had not the energy for it. His Grace added: "I think it will be done now, or never, for what Brougham takes in hand will be carried through." There were no more than eight Opposition peers besides the Duke, and perhaps twice the number of Ministerial, present during the debate. The throne and the space behind the bar were crowded, and great admiration was expressed by the audience. I was amused by the remark of a county member, who said: "This is prodigiously fine indeed. Why Brougham puts one in mind of Demosthenes, or some of those fellows one reads of at school." The speech was not less successful out of the House. Nothing else was talked of on 'Change the next day. Even amongst the lower classes it spread a wonderful notion of the Chancellor's merit. General L'Estrange, who was at this time returning from the Isle of France, asked his pilot, off the Lizard, what were the news. "Oh," said the sailor, "Brougham is doing wonders in the Court of Chancery. He has decided more causes in the last three months than Eldon did in as many years. There never was such a man."—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE FIRST REFORM BILL.—DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT.

1831. Æt. 49.

The first Reform Bill.

LORD ALTHORP now almost despaired of the country deriving any benefit from a Whig Government, and, except as a point of honour, his only inducement to remain in office was the question of Parliamentary Reform. This, he used to say, had been the great aim and object of his public life. Indeed, it was one of the few subjects on which he might be regarded as an enthusiast. Hitherto, however, he had done little for the cause even in debate,* partly because he considered it useless to raise the question in the House of Commons whilst such utter indifference prevailed towards it in the country, and partly because he feared that the partial removal of abuses might fritter away the strength of the case against the existing system, and thus obstruct what he had most at heart—a large and comprehensive measure, based on popular principles, and in the true spirit of progress. He entered, therefore, into Lord Grey's plans with a zeal and singleness of purpose which that great statesman was not accustomed to find in political alliances.

* See note (*a*) at the end of this chapter, p. 308.

Lord Grey sorely needed such assistance. He was preparing to launch his vessel on a boisterous ocean, with a crew to many of whom the navigation was both unknown and unwelcome. The Whigs already felt how feeble was their hold on the nation. If Reform had brought them into office, it seemed not likely to keep them there. Their party was comparatively small in number, and they could count neither on the support of the Radicals nor the forbearance of the Tories: a false step on the Reform question would inevitably be a fatal one. Then the Administration, though strong in ability, had the weakness that usually attaches to a coalition in dealing with measures on which its leading members had previously been at variance. Some had adopted Reform from necessity, and others from choice, and that they should act cordially together in the accomplishment of their task was not to be expected. The responsibility thus thrown on Lord Grey was immense, and had he been like Lord Rockingham or Lord Ripon, the Ministry would not have lasted many weeks.

1831. Æt. 49.

Lord Althorp enjoyed Lord Grey's entire confidence, and they worked in unison on the Reform Bill from the beginning. Each had valuable qualities which the other wanted. There were many occasions in the ensuing transactions when the master-mind and experienced statesmanship of Lord Grey might have failed, but for the strong sense, freedom from all prejudice, and imperturbable good temper of Lord Althorp. The personal

1831. Æt. 49.

influence of the latter over his colleagues in the Cabinet, especially those who had no previous connection with Lord Grey, was almost as valuable as his advice. This was shown very early in the proceedings of the important committee of four* out of which the Bill virtually originated. The success of the committee depended on the hearty co-operation of its members; but it happened that one of the most able of them (Sir James Graham) neither approved the bold views of Lord Durham and Lord John Russell, nor had any deference for their opinions. It is very doubtful what course he would have taken but for Lord Althorp, without consulting whom he never ventured on any important step in the inquiry; they were in constant communication, and the Report signed by Sir James breathed far more of Lord Althorp's spirit than his own. It is well known† that he gave his vote for the Ballot at Lord Althorp's recommendation, not, I suspect, with the idea that it could be carried in the Cabinet, but that the less Liberal members of the Government should acquiesce in a low rate of

* These were, Lord Durham, Sir James Graham, Lords Duncannon and John Russell. The two latter were not in the Cabinet.—AUTHOR.

† No man was more bold in debate than Sir James Graham. He was by nature both timid and irresolute. A curious but just picture of his mind is given in Mr. McCullagh Torrens's interesting Life of him (v. i., p. 168). He could argue admirably; but to decide when he incurred serious responsibility drove him to seek the counsel of some one to whom he looked up; and in Lord Grey's government the only person he so regarded was Lord Althorp. Sir James Graham entertained a great dread of the violence of the working-classes: he often expressed this to me.—AUTHOR.

franchise by way of compromise. Lord Althorp correctly observed, that without an irresistible amount of popular support no Reform Bill of any value could pass into a law. 1831. Æt. 49.

It is mentioned in the Life of Sir James Graham "that with him the counsel of Lord Althorp went for more than that of any other man."*

As any new fact that casts light on the origin of the Reform Bill is of some historical interest, I may mention that Lord Grey did not wait for the final Report of the Committee to discuss their recommendations in the Cabinet, but desired them, as soon as they had dispatched any of the important questions under their consideration, to make a special report on it at once to him. This he proceeded to consider with Lord Althorp, and out of it they together framed a corresponding resolution, embodying their own views, which Lord Grey then submitted to the Cabinet as part of the ground-work of the proposed Bill. The discussions that followed would form an interesting chapter of our constitutional history, and here I must express my regret at the premature close of Lord Althorp's autobiography, for with the information which his honesty and candour would have warranted as true, aided by the reflected light of a quarter of a century, we should have been enabled to estimate more correctly the views of the authors of the Reform Bill, and to judge how far the expectations of some and the

* Life of Sir James Graham, v. i., p. 339.

1831. Æt. 49. apprehensions of others had been realised by the event. We should also have obtained a clearer insight into the characters of the statesmen by whom this mighty work was accomplished.

Details. Among the points that most engaged the attention of the Cabinet were, I believe, the disfranchisement of the nomination boroughs and the amount of the electoral franchise. On the first, even the Lord Chancellor had his doubts. In his own scheme of Reform, prepared when he was in opposition, the retention of some seats in the condemned boroughs was an essential feature, and he is known to have said the same subsequently in private. Lord Althorp, on the other hand, was opposed to any compromise on the subject. Unlike Mr. Pitt, his conviction of the pernicious effects of these boroughs had been strengthened by even his short tenure of office; for I recollect his observing that he had scarcely been seated at the Treasury before the pressure put upon him by some of the great borough proprietors, to make what he considered most improper appointments, became absolutely intolerable. Lord Grey agreed with him.

The amount of the franchise was, perhaps, the most debateable point of all, and remained open almost to the last. For the moment, some of the members of the Cabinet seemed to have changed sides; Lord Melbourne, a very recent and reluctant convert to Reform, said in his lively way, "I am for a low figure. Unless we have a large basis to work upon, we shall do nothing." Lord Althorp and Lord

Durham, on the other hand, would have consented to a £15 or £20 franchise, if accompanied by the Ballot—which brought on them the shrewd remark of the Lord Chancellor, that the Bill would then create many more nomination boroughs than it destroyed. Lord Grey here differed from Lord Althorp and Lord Durham. He abhorred the Ballot, and on no terms could he be prevailed upon to accept it. It was believed that he would rather have abandoned the Bill. Neither did he think that the country would be satisfied with a small constituency, however elected. I was once in his room, soon after his accession to office, when the Lord Chancellor dwelt on a recent dispatch from Lord Granville (then Ambassador in Paris), announcing great ministerial successes in the Chamber of Deputies, as proving the strength of the Orleans dynasty. Lord Grey immediately replied that he could feel no such confidence, as long as the number of electors in France continued so insignificant in proportion to the population. "What trust," he observed, "can be placed in majorities in the Chamber, when the electoral body is under the direct control of the Government?"* a remark of which the truth was afterwards seen in the dethronement of Louis Philippe by the people in defiance of a majority in the Chamber. 1831. Æt. 49.

Great precautions were taken to prevent the disclosure of the Ministerial plan. The Lord Chan-

* An exactly similar opinion respecting French politics was many years later expressed in my presence by Mr. Gladstone.—EDITOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

cellor told me that the copies of the Bill were made by Lord Durham's eldest daughter, a young lady hardly out of the school-room.* It was not till the last week in February that the Bill was referred to Mr. Wm. Adam,† an eminent Parliamentary lawyer, and Mr. Stephenson, a Chancery barrister, intimately connected with Lord Durham, for correction. By this time the excitement in the country had greatly increased, as appeared in the extension of the Political Unions and the violence of their proceedings; but among the higher classes this feeling showed itself so faintly that the Ministers were suspected of doubting its existence, and fears were entertained that their Bill would not be strong enough to satisfy the country. Even on the very day that it was to be brought forward, these apprehensions prevailed at Brooks's, where the general despondency was alarmingly ominous of an approaching failure. The secret was so well kept

* To make copies of the Bill would have been a very heavy task for a young lady to perform. I think it most likely that the author referred to the Report of the Committee of the Cabinet who prepared the scheme of the Bill; during the preparation of which (as I am informed by members of Lord Grey's family) Lord Durham was much assisted in the necessary copying by his wife and eldest daughter. —EDITOR.

† Mr. W. Adam, K.C., a younger son of Lord Commissioner Adam, was a lawyer of extensive practice on the Western Circuits, and before Parliamentary Committees. His accomplishments and amiable disposition made him a general favourite. He had long been auditor to the Duke of Bedford, and was a Scotch cousin of the Lord Chancellor. His coadjutor, Mr. Stephenson, was auditor of the Duke of Sussex as well as of Lord Durham, and lived very much among the leading Whigs. He eventually became a Commissioner of Excise, and died in 1858.—AUTHOR.

that although Lord Lowther, a very adroit intriguer, had contrived almost at the last hour to learn some of the leading provisions of the Bill, when he mentioned them no one believed him. 1831. Æt. 49.

The Bill brought forward in the House of Commons by Lord John Russell.

This memorable debate, unexampled in modern times both for its length and importance, began at a few minutes before five o'clock. There was a large concourse of people both in Palace Yard and the approaches to the House, and they respectfully fell back to make a passage for Lord Althorp, who had walked from Downing Street with Lord John Russell. As far as I could judge (being in the crowd), the general interest was in Lord Althorp, Lord John being then so little known that few persons noticed him. I followed them into the House, where they at once took their seats next to each other in the middle of the Ministerial Bench. Lord John looked very pale and subdued. He cast occasional glances at the immense array of the Opposition in front of him, and then spoke to Lord Althorp, as if commenting on the disagreeable contrast it presented to its appearance when the Whigs sat there. He had indeed abundant reason to feel that he was about to address an audience of which a large majority were, either from principle or prejudice, his decided opponents. Lord Althorp was calm and thoughtful as usual.

Lord John Russell spoke for rather more than two hours. His speech, though highly praised by the country at the time, has been censured by Radical writers as not equal to the occasion. It appeared

1831. Æt. 49.

to me admirably fitted to obtain what he aimed at—the success of his measure. His constitutional argument, on which he perhaps dwelt too long, called forth a slight degree of languor and impatience, and yet it served to increase the effect of his announcement of Schedule A. This came with an absolutely electrifying shock. Loud cheers burst at once from the Ministerial Benches, but these were answered by equally loud shouts of derision from the Opposition, and this conflict lasted through the whole enumeration of the boroughs in the two Schedules. It was difficult to say on which side the voices predominated.

It was for the peroration of the speech that Lord John Russell had reserved his best powers, and a more noble and convincing plea for Reform had not been heard for many years within the walls of the House. It stamped him as a statesman, an orator, and a patriot, but it fell on ears deafened by the effect of the Schedules, and he sat down *in a profound silence.*

Debate.

It was the opinion of Lord Brougham that if Sir Robert Peel had now risen and said that he would not discuss so revolutionary and so mad a proposal, and had insisted on immediately dividing the House, the Bill would have been rejected: and in the general confusion at the moment this might certainly have happened; but then a far more revolutionary Bill would have been the inevitable result.* But Sir Robert was in no frame of mind to risk so hazardous

* See note (*b*) at the end of this chapter, p. 309.

an experiment. Lord Althorp, who watched him as he sat opposite, told me that during the introductory part of Lord John's speech his features expressed only astonishment and contempt, but as the plan was unfolded he looked more and more cast down, and at last he held his hands before his face as if unable to control his emotions.* He foresaw the imminent danger of his party. Not so his followers, who were clamorous and confident. Sir Henry Hardinge went so far as to say to those around him, that as soon as the plan had been ventilated, public indignation would drive the Ministers from office. 1831. Æt. 49.

After a few remarks from Sir John Sebright, to second Lord John's motion, Sir Robert Inglis rose in reply, and this was a signal for a general rush of members into the lobby, where they collected in groups to discuss the Bill. In my attempts to learn the opinions of the Liberal members, I found none of mark unreservedly in its favour. There seemed to be a general impression, extending to those who had called for increased energy on the part of the Ministers, that they had now gone too far. Some of those most advanced in their views confessed that they were quite bewildered, and must have time to make up their minds. Mr. Hudson Gurney, a very clever and original thinker, who could not be counted

* "He turned black in the face," I heard Lord Althorp say, when he and Lord Sydenham were staying at Althorp. He said also that Sir R. Peel could undoubtedly have thrown out the Bill had he risen at once, and made one of his great speeches. The same is more than once repeated in the Greville Memoirs, v. ii., pp. 126-7; v. iii., p. 23. See also Lord Dalling's Memoir of Sir R. Peel, 88.—Lord Lyttelton.

1831. Æt. 49.

on beforehand by either party, surprised me by saying, that he had no doubt. "I consider it," he observed, "an honour to the age for any Administration to have proposed this Bill, not that there is a chance of these men carrying it. Only Oliver Cromwell could do that. But if the Bill should pass, I ask where are the men to govern the country?"

The interest of the night was certainly transferred from the House to the lobby, and the latter was in proportion far the most crowded. Neither Sir Robert Inglis, who consumed a couple of hours in delivering an elaborate pamphlet against all Reform, nor Mr. Horace Twiss, who declaimed in the same spirit against the principles of the Bill, were men to obtain attention in such a crisis. A partial restoration of order took place, when Lord Althorp, seeing the general desire for an adjournment, rose to close the debate. His speech was not of a character to find a place in history, for independently of his defects as a speaker, he had ceded to Lord John all the opportunity of distinction to be gained that night by a member of the Government. He spoke only because his position as Leader, and his personal weight both in the House and the country, made an early expression of opinion from him on this momentous question absolutely necessary. He said what he really felt with his usual plainness, and at the same time so earnestly, and so resolutely, as to fix the minds of many timid, honest reformers who generally sought his pilotage on the political waters.

Much that fell from him was repeated in more eloquent language by some of the speakers later in the debate, with great effect. It was at a crisis like this that his intervention was of importance, and some of the ablest members of the House, such as Mr. Brougham at one time and Sir Francis Baring at another, have told me that his decision and the correctness of his judgment alone fully entitled him to the authority which he exercised over his followers, so that he was in fact one of the safest of leaders. The House adjourned before midnight. 1831. Æt. 49.

Undecided as the reception of the Ministerial measure was in appearance, I believe the Ministers were satisfied. They had gained a commanding position. They had struck the members of the Opposition with terror, and this was pretty sure to be followed by the support of their own party. They might fail in the first onset, but they saw victory before them at a distance. Reform indeed was virtually carried.

It cannot be said that public opinion in London the next day was decided in favour of the Government measure. Much doubt prevailed both as to its merit and its fate. The meeting held at the Guildhall to support it, which by the way had been got up owing to a suggestion of the Lord Chancellor's,* passed some flaming Resolutions, but it was very thinly attended, and Alderman Thompson, who came there as member for the City, spoke of

* I went by his desire to the Lord Mayor to press him to call the meeting, which he was quite ready to do.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

it to me as a decided failure.* In the large towns, on the other hand, all was rapture and admiration of the Ministers, and the resolutions immediately passed to that effect both at public meetings and by municipal bodies were of great service to the cause. London quickly sympathised with them, and was proud to have set them the example.

Enthusiasm for Reform in the large towns.

I must now however recollect that I am not writing a history of the Bill, but a life of Lord Althorp; and having launched the measure, in a later stage of which he bore an eminent part, I shall confine myself more strictly to my subject.

The debate lasted for seven nights, during which I heard some very fine and some very poor speeches. The former much predominated, and they displayed a degree of eloquence and argument which certainly has not been surpassed in the debates of the Reformed House of Commons on the same question. Mr. Macaulay and Sir Robert Peel, each in his turn, was magnificent; but when the latter admitted the necessity of some Reform, I perceived an immediate change in the countenance of Sir Charles Wetherell. He became very grave and ceased to cheer. The ultra Tories followed his example, and in private their abuse of Sir Robert was so unqualified, that they were expected to withdraw out of mere spite towards him.

* The Alderman acted under this impression, and so far committed himself against the Bill to the Tories that he eventually lost his seat. He was moderate in opinions, and personally popular. He afterwards became member for Westmoreland, where he had bought large estates.—AUTHOR.

1831.
Æt. 49.

By the seventh and last night of the debate, it became evident that the Whigs had caught the enthusiasm of the country in favour of the Bill, while the Tory members were determined to throw it out, and would be able to do so. The mass of Petitions for the Bill that were presented in the fortnight's interval between the first and second Reading, had somewhat dispirited its opponents, and combined with the exertions of the Whig whippers-in, Lord Duncannon and Mr. Ellice, kept several of them away from the House. At the last moment it was announced that Mr. Calcraft,* who had made a clever speech against the Bill, had been prevailed on to vote for it, and this gave the Ministers their majority of one.†

* Mr. Calcraft had been a staunch Whig until 1828, when he joined the Duke of Wellington's Ministry, with the Knight of Kerry, and Lord Rosslyn, with the consent or acquiescence of their leaders, who then confidently looked forward to a coalition with the Duke on a liberal basis. When these expectations failed, it was believed that these Whig statesmen would at once return to their friends in Opposition. Their failure to do so was (I humbly think) much too severely punished by the total oblivion of their former services. Mr. Calcraft had a very prepossessing person and manner, and was very agreeable in society. He had succeeded to a large estate from his father, the well-known army agent, who was also the friend and confidant of Lord Chatham. The nomination borough of Wareham formed part of the property.—AUTHOR.

† During the division, a member frightened the Speaker exceedingly by telling him that he would have to give his casting vote in favour of the Bill, the numbers being equal; this created great amusement among the Liberals, as the Speaker was, perhaps, of all the members the most opposed to it. He had a narrow escape. I am told by Lord Halifax (than whom there can be no better authority) that Mr. Calcraft's determination to vote for the Bill was known by Mr. Ellice earlier than I have stated, and that it was Sir Andrew Agnew who, contrary to the general expectation, at the last moment joined the Reformers and gave them the victory. Mr. Calcraft's change of opinion was, for obvious reasons, kept a secret.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

Second reading of the Bill carried.

This vote, though not unexpected, was the cause of additional excitement and exasperation throughout the country. Moderate politicians on both sides became alarmed, and it was reported that many of the Tories having satisfied their honour by voting against the Bill, would abstain from any factious opposition in the Committee. Several of the Whigs were ready to make large concessions in return for such forbearance. The members however who held these sentiments only talked. They had neither the energy nor the influence to act with effect, and their voices were drowned by the approach of the next stage of the Bill.

General Gascoigne's amendment.

The committal of the Bill was then moved by Lord John Russell in a very spirited and able speech. This was met by General Gascoigne's amendment, that the number of members in England and Wales should not be diminished. The debate turned almost entirely on the merits of the Bill, which were disputed with renewed acrimony by the Tories, who absolutely asserted the Schedules to be a Ministerial job. Lord Althorp justly treated the amendment as the first of a series of motions which it was intended to bring forward against the Bill, and as such, he said, he should give it a decided negative; but he could not be content without noticing the charges made against the honour of the Ministers. "Thinking as I do," he observed, "this measure of such vast importance, and so highly beneficial to the country that upon it we might rest our hopes both of present repu-

tation and of fame with posterity, is it to be supposed that any private motives of personal interest should make us swerve from the just line of impartiality? The Honourable Member has, I think, said so in the heat of debate. I cannot conceive that he really intended to impute such motives to us. If he does, I do not envy him his mind."

1831. Æt. 49.

This homely rebuke was administered with a simplicity and earnestness that carried conviction into the minds of most of those who heard it, even among the Tories, and it was received with loud cheers.

The Opposition had a majority of nine.

Majority for the Opposition.

The only resource now left to the Ministers was an early Dissolution. They had no time to lose, for the King hesitated, and the Opposition were prepared to give him a pretext for withholding his consent, by obtaining an address from the Lords against the Dissolution. Only one day intervened before matters were brought to a crisis, as the Opposition, having fruitlessly, on the night of the 21st of April, tried to obtain from Lord Althorp an admission of the approaching Dissolution, determined, in spite of his earnest request, to adjourn the House at once, and to make their movement in the Lords the next day. This involved a delay in passing the Ordnance Estimates, which were among the Orders of the Day, and as the Tories believed, necessary to be passed before the Dissolution could take place. There could be nothing irregular or unconstitutional

1831. Æt. 49.

in such a proceeding, for although the Dissolution was believed to be imminent, Lord Althorp said his mouth must be closed on the subject, and the Order of the Day for the Committee on the Estimates was not yet before the House, and might not come on. It was, however, an undeniable proof of the determination of the Tories to stop the Bill at all hazards; nor were they without hopes of success, for it was confidently asserted in my hearing among the Tories in the House that the King had pledged himself to the Duke of Cumberland not to dissolve, and that Sir Charles Wetherell had been authorised by the Duke to say so. The Duke was under the gallery during the Debate, and in constant communication with members of his party. The adjournment was carried by a majority of twelve, and as Lord Althorp afterwards stated, if it did not actually cause, it justified the Dissolution.

Dissolution of Parliament.

The next day, the King came down to the House of Lords, and prorogued Parliament, with a view to its instant Dissolution. Until the guns were heard announcing his departure from the Palace, the Opposition did not abandon all hope, and the desperate efforts at resistance they made in both Houses were hardly consistent with the loyal character of their party. In the Lords, the Peers nearly came to blows, and the fury of the Opposition was increased by the Chancellor's charge against the House of Commons of having stopped the supplies. The remark was, I think, unpremeditated, and provoked by the taunts and angry observations on the

other side. At the moment he was scarcely understood, but he was not the less cheered, and his words became a favourite cry at the elections. In the Commons the scene was not less violent. An oversight of Lord Althorp's in not continuing to speak when he had got possession of the House, gave Sir Robert Peel an opportunity of being heard, and of exposing himself, which he very seldom did, for he completely lost his temper, and only added to the tumult and disorder of the scene. Amidst the cheers and groans it was difficult to catch his words, but I was told that he said the time was approaching when no man of honour could serve the Crown.* He was angry enough to say anything, and it was quite as well for him that the arrival of the Usher of the Black Rod interrupted his speech by summoning the House to the Lords to receive the sentence which

1831. Æt. 49.

* I was present during the whole of this scene, which I distinctly remember. After Sir Richard Vyvyan had been heard at great length against the Government, Sir Francis Burdett and Sir Robert Peel both rose at the same time, and the Speaker called on Sir Robert Peel. This was thought most unfair by our side of the House, as it deprived them of any hearing whatever. Lord Althorp immediately rose amidst great clamour, interposing before Sir R. Peel, and as soon as he succeeded in obtaining a hearing, he said that he believed he was in order in now moving "That Sir F. Burdett be now heard." The Speaker replied that Lord Althorp *was* in order, and put the question, but immediately after called upon Sir R. Peel to speak to it, allowing him to make a general speech against the Government, which was no doubt a most irregular proceeding. But it is quite certain that in moving for Sir F. Burdett being heard, Lord Althorp was never "in possession of the House" in such a manner as would have justified him after Sir R. Peel had been called on in making a general speech himself, and there can be no doubt that he would have been stopped by the Speaker if he had attempted to do so, though it is true that the Speaker afterwards himself suggested and allowed a similar irregularity.—LORD BELPER.

1831. so much pains had been taken to avert. Lord
Æt. 49. Althorp headed the throng of triumphant Liberals.

(*a*) It may appear strange, but it is not less true, that till almost the eve of bringing in the Reform Bill, the Whigs had not ventured to make Reform a party question. Far from there being any call for it in the country, the public meetings occasionally held to forward it were absolutely subjects of derision from the insignificance both of the attendance and the speakers. The Radicals may fairly contend that they were the only active Reformers; but their plans were so jejune and extravagant, and their characters as individuals generally so low, that they prejudiced rather than benefited the cause. The Tories had no difficulty in persuading the higher and middle classes that Reform was synonymous with revolution; and in the hands of those who were then advocating it, this was really the case. Neither Lord John Russell nor Lord Althorp had any connection with the Radical leaders; though Lord Althorp had for many years favoured some of their tenets, for while he disclaimed Annual Parliaments, Electoral Districts, and Universal Suffrage, he supported Triennial Parliaments, Ballot, an altered distribution of Seats, and a great Reduction of the Suffrage. The merit of the Whigs is that they countenanced the principle of Parliamentary Reform when it was rancorously opposed and depreciated by the Tories, and that their constant resistance to the arbitrary proceedings of the party in power, their efforts for the diffusion of education, and the improvement of the condition of the lower classes generally, made Reform, even by the admission of the Radicals, a certain, though it might be a too distant, result.

No part of Lord John Russell's brilliant career is more deserving of admiration than his adherence to Reform in those bad times; but wearied by the absence of sympathy in the country and the House of Commons, even he, with his proverbial tenacity of purpose, exclaimed so late as the

year 1830, that if he could only obtain members for the principal unrepresented towns, he would await a change in the public mind for larger concessions. 1831. Æt. 49.

The change came, with the suddenness and rapidity of a whirlwind. The democratic spirit then raging on the Continent was found to have reached our shores, and showed itself in the cry for Parliamentary Reform. The Whigs did nothing to inflame the passions of the people. They were almost as much taken by surprise as the Tories; but when they saw a general movement among the lower and middle classes, in a direction which they had long approved, they boldly and wisely made it their own, and the preference given to them by the people over the Radical agitators, is a trait both honourable to the national character, and most encouraging to the advocates of progress. It would have been impossible for the Duke of Wellington, or Sir Robert Peel, after their recent conduct on the Catholic question, to ask the confidence of the country to carry a Reform Bill.—AUTHOR.

(*b*) I extract the following note from Mr. Roebuck's History, V. II., p. 87:—

"I have often heard Lord Brougham relate a circumstance connected with this celebrated motion, which vividly illustrates the ignorance of the administration, even at the eleventh hour, as to the real feelings of the people. The members of the Cabinet, who were not in the House of Commons, dined that day with the Lord Chancellor, whose secretary, Mr., now Sir Denis Le Marchant, sat under the gallery of the Commons, and sent half-hour bulletins to the noble Lord, describing the progress of the debate. They ran thus:—'Lord John has been up ten minutes: House very full: great interest and anxiety shown.' Another came describing the extraordinary sensation produced by the plan on both sides of the House. At last came one saying: 'Lord John is near the end of his speech—my next will tell you who follows him.'—'Now,' said the noble host and narrator of the story, 'we had often talked over and guessed

1831. Æt. 49.

at the probable course of the Opposition, and I always said, were I in Peel's place, I would not condescend to argue the point, but would, as soon as John Russell sat down, get up and declare that I would not debate so revolutionary, so mad a proposal, and would insist on dividing upon it at once. If he does that, I used to say, we are dead beat; but if he allows himself to be drawn into a discussion, we shall succeed.' When Le Marchant's bulletin at length came, which was to tell us the course adopted by the Opposition, I held the note unopened in my hand, and laughing, said:—'Now this decides our fate, therefore, let us take a glass of wine all round, in order that we may with proper nerve read the fatal missive.' Having done so, I opened the note, and seeing the first line, which was:—'Peel has been up twenty minutes,' I flourished the note round my head, and shouted:—'Hurrah! hurrah! Victory! victory! Peel has been speaking twenty minutes;' and so we took another glass to congratulate ourselves upon our good fortune!'—Such is the anecdote, which proves, among other things, how uncertain as guides are such anecdotes for history. The events, doubtless, occurred, much as Lord Brougham is accustomed to relate them; but Sir Robert Peel did not speak on that night's debate. Sir John Sebright seconded Lord John Russell's motion, and Sir Robert Inglis was the next succeeding speaker, in vehement, nay fierce reply to Lord John."

Lord Brougham was perfectly correct—the error was mine—I had gone out of the House at the end of Lord John's speech, to finish some notes of it, which I was preparing for the Lord Chancellor, and on my return I asked a stranger near the door, whether Sir Robert Peel was speaking. He probably misunderstood me, and answered in the affirmative, and I wrote to the Lord Chancellor accordingly.

I agree with Mr. Roebuck that the anecdote "shows how little the Ministry were aware of the state of popular feeling, when they believed that Sir Robert *could* so have

disposed of the proposed measure. So daring and insolent a disregard of popular opinion would have risked everything which Sir Robert Peel and every wise man holds dear." See also *Quarterly Review*, v. xlvii. p. 464, to the same effect.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW ELECTIONS.—LORD ALTHORP'S CONTEST FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—HIS RETURN.

1831. Æt. 49.

THE DISSOLUTION, with the circumstances attending it, had a prodigious effect, and high as it raised the hopes of the Ministers, these were more than realised.

The new elections.

The writs for the new Parliament were issued only a few days, when one borough after another in rapid succession was announced to have returned Reform Candidates—even boroughs the reputed strongholds of Toryism rebelled, in some instances, with partial success against the dictation of their patrons, and the Reformers prevailed in several of the corporate towns, where the voters would be reduced to insignificance by the Bill.

The last hope of the Tories rested on the counties; but here they met with the most signal defeats. The princely wealth and power of Lord Lonsdale could not prevent his losing seats both in Westmoreland and Cumberland, nor were the Dukes of Buckingham and Rutland, or the Earl of Egremont more fortunate in Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Sussex. In the West, so long under the sway of

the great Tory squirearchy, the reaction was unequivocal. Sir Thomas Acland, beloved as he was by his constituents in Devon, gave way to Lord John Russell. Mr. Bankes, the Nestor of his party, was beaten by Mr. Calcraft in Dorset, and Mr. Pendarves and Sir Charles Lemon easily carried Cornwall. The political aspect of the country seemed at once entirely changed. There was no constituency in which many of the Tories were not found to support the Reformers, and the Radicals, throwing aside all jealousy, were most eager in the cause; their voices, however, being more valuable than their votes, of which latter the amount was insignificant. The Whigs were absolutely astonished at their own success, for although they had so long advocated popular principles, it was only in particular districts they could ever obtain the general support of the people. They sullied their victory by the extravagant use they made of the King's name, which was the more to be regretted as without this illegitimate aid they were sure of a large majority; "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill," being the almost universal cry from one end of the country to another.

1831. Æt. 49.

Lord Althorp had his share of the triumph, which came upon him quite by surprise. Northamptonshire was one of the counties on which Parliamentary Reform appeared to make the least impression; owing to the character of its constituency, which consisted chiefly of substantial and prosperous tenants, who were proud of their landlords, and

1831. Æt. 49.

identified with them both in interest and politics. Toryism was the predominant creed of the landlords, modified by a traditional deference to the noble families that had long lived amongst them, and Lord Althorp had many Tory supporters who voted for him as the son of Earl Spencer, no less than from personal esteem. His companions in the hunting field had, without distinction of politics, agreed that he was the very person to represent the county; but on such a vital question as Reform, the Tories intimated that they must go against him, and in common with the Whigs for his sake they earnestly deprecated a contest. He knew so well the insecurity of his position that he rejoiced to find on the eve of the nomination that he was likely to walk over the field with his old acquaintance Mr. Cartwright.

There was a great attendance at the nomination, and the excitement amongst the crowd indicated some dissatisfaction at the quiet prospects of the day. Murmurs against the pusillanimity of the Whigs reached Lord Althorp's ears. He was for the first time coldly received. In the morning he had been entreated to join in an opposition to Mr. Cartwright; but he positively refused, and hoped the idea had been given up, as it came from persons of no influence, and was not in his opinion the general wish of the party.

Lord Althorp's contest for Northampshire.

To his astonishment, as soon as he had been proposed and seconded, a Northampton shoemaker jumped up and proposed Lord Milton, who, at the

time, was in deep distress at the recent loss of his wife, and ignorant of what was going on. Moreover, Lord Milton, though the son of a large proprietor, did not reside in the county. A dreadful uproar followed. The Tories with evident indignation then proposed Sir Charles Knightley as the colleague of Mr. Cartwright; but none of the candidates could obtain a hearing, and the proceedings closed by the announcement that the show of hands was in favour of Lord Althorp and Lord Milton. It soon appeared that Mr. Cartwright and Sir Charles Knightley had coalesced, without any communication having been previously made to Lord Althorp to ascertain whether he gave his sanction to the Opposition; but they were too angry to weigh probabilities, and suspected that he had been carried away by the heat of the moment to commit something like a breach of faith. This distressed him the more, because Sir Charles Knightley was an old and intimate friend. But he felt he had only one course to take; he made a declaration from the window of the George Inn, that although the contest had been entered into without his concurrence, yet as his opponents had coalesced, the case was now changed, and he should consider himself a traitor to his cause, if he did not exert himself to the utmost to defend it.

1831. Æt. 49.

Neither party had made any preparations for a contest, but it was not the less severe. Lord Althorp, as he expected, instead of being accompanied to the hustings by a long train of friendly squires, found himself almost deserted by his aristocratical sup-

1831. Æt. 49.

porters; Mr. Bouverie, of Delapré Abbey, and some of the Fitzroys, being amongst the very few of that class who represented the Whig interest in the county. With their assistance, in utter uncertainty as to the probable number of his voters, but too well aware of the strength of his opponents, he organised, as well as time would allow, the collection and conveyance of his supporters to the poll. There was a frightful void in his ranks, but this was made up by the influx of voters from the towns, and of the smaller freeholders. Many came up of themselves, a regular canvass being impossible, and every day proved by their increasing numbers how warm was their zeal for Reform. To compare small things with great, as Inkermann has been called the soldiers' battle, so this was the people's contest. It originated with them, and they bore the brunt of it, though it is very doubtful whether, with any other candidate than Lord Althorp, they could have won. He seemed more in his element amongst them than in the House of Commons. His speeches gave general satisfaction, though he never descended to personal or unfair attacks on his opponents, and neither boasted of the King's support, nor complained of the stoppage of the Supplies. He had always been a favourite with the freeholders, but they thought they had never known before the truth and geniality of his nature.

So complete had been the surprise both to Whigs and Tories, that on the first day of polling there were actually no booths in readiness for the voters

till late in the morning, and the voters polled were in consequence comparatively few; the poll being,— 1831. Æt. 49.

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Althorp | 139 |
| Lord Milton | 136 |
| Mr. Cartwright | 79 |
| Sir Charles Knightley | 75 |

Lord Althorp's interest being strongest at Northampton, this majority gave no discouragement to his opponents, who confidently boasted that it would be turned the next day into a minority by the arrival of the farmers from a distance. They declared that they would keep the poll open to the last moment, and would spare neither money nor trouble to win.

The next day, however, only revealed their weakness. The country voters came in, but many of them polled in spite of their landlords for the Reform candidates.

The voting continued during the week with great spirit, and on Saturday the numbers were—

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Althorp | 2468 |
| Lord Milton | 2128 |
| Mr. Cartwright | 2009 |
| Sir C. Knightley | 1418 |

On Sunday it became generally known the Tories could carry on the struggle no longer. On Monday the poll opened only *pro formâ;* at the expiration of an hour it closed, and the Under-Sheriff announced the result—

| | |
|---|---|
| Lord Althorp | 2476 |
| Lord Milton | 2135 |
| Mr. Cartwright | 2019 |
| Sir C. Knightley | 1423 |

1831. Æt. 49.

His return.

The declaration that the two Reform candidates had been elected was received with tremendous cheering. Lord Althorp returned thanks in a modest and manly speech, ascribing his success to the zeal of the freeholders for Reform, and dwelling on the importance of the example they had given to other Constituencies.

The Tories were deeply mortified at the return of two Whig members for a county where their party was believed to be so strong; and they accounted for it by a fact that must have been almost equally unpalatable to them—the popularity of Lord Althorp—which they asserted had carried the election in spite of the Bill.*

Success of the Ministry in the elections.

The success of the Ministers in the elections would have been less complete if the political organisation of the Tories had remained as it was before Catholic Emancipation; that measure broke up the feeling of blind devotedness to their leaders, and to their traditional tenets, for which the party was distinguished. Lord Granville Somerset sorrowfully observed to me in the last month of the Duke's Government, that in this respect public opinion was quite changed, so that in the country clubs the old toast of Church and King was given with no enthusiasm, and indeed often omitted. The management of the elections by the Tory party had been admir-

* Mr. Croker observed "that Lord Althorp would not have run the slightest risk of his return but for the Reform Bill. He had been elected on account of the esteem which the freeholders, in common with all who knew him, even his warmest political opponents, always felt for him."—AUTHOR.

able. They employed the most skilful attorneys throughout the country as agents, and besides, they were pretty sure of the best agents in the parochial clergy, for the Church had long been warmly on their side. The Whigs, except in times of great popular excitement, found themselves much overmatched by them. At this Dissolution, however, the tables were quite turned. Mr. Ellice,* the Secretary for the Treasury, a very clever man, beat the enemy with their own weapons. He collected large sums from the leading Whigs, with which he purchased several of the nomination boroughs, previously represented by Tories, and he aided many of the party in expensive contests which, so soon after a general election, they could not have undertaken without a liberal subscription.

* Mr. Edward Ellice, M.P. for Coventry, a brother-in-law of Earl Grey. He had been an eminent merchant in the North American trade, and his connection with the North West Company had brought him a large fortune. He will be mentioned repeatedly in the course of this work.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MEETING OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT.—THE SECOND REFORM BILL.—THE COMMITTEE.—BILL PASSED IN THE COMMONS.—REJECTED ON THE SECOND READING IN THE LORDS.

1831. Æt. 49.

Meeting of the new Parliament.

It seemed probable on the opening of the new Parliament that Lord Althorp would find his duties far less onerous than in the preceding Session. All political questions were absorbed in that of Parliamentary Reform; and the Reform Bill, being under the special charge of Lord John Russell, virtually gave that nobleman a large share in the leadership of the House; and it is to the credit of both, that this divided authority neither led to any ill feeling between them, nor was productive of any mismanagement of the public business. Though each had a certain character for obstinacy, and Lord Althorp carried his views of Reform much further than Lord John, they continued, as they began, intimate friends.

The Session opened on the 21st of June. Sir Robert Peel had previously, at a great party dinner at Lord Londonderry's, earnestly recommended moderation to his followers, and the Address was

carefully worded to guard against an amendment; so the angry feelings of the Opposition were vented in complaints against the recent Dissolution, which I notice because they rather disagreeably involved Lord Althorp, whom it was desired to make a witness against his colleagues and his party. It appeared that, after the division on General Gascoigne's motion, he had written a letter to one of his constituents to prepare for an immediate Dissolution. This letter was brought forward to disprove the Lord Chancellor's assertion, that the Dissolution had been caused by the conduct of the House of Commons in stopping the supplies; and it was alleged with more foundation, that the use made of the Chancellor's statement by Sir James Graham and others of the Ministers and their friends, had told very unfairly on the elections. Sir James made an elaborate and able defence; but Lord Althorp, in fewer words, satisfied the House and the country, when he showed, that on the night of General Gascoigne's motion the late House of Commons knew perfectly well after his declaration that he would not go on with the Bill; though he declined to say what was the intention of the Government with regard to a Dissolution. "He was not then going to assert that the adjournment was the cause of the Dissolution; but he would say, that the way in which that adjournment was referred to in connection with the Dissolution, was this—that the success of the motion proved, with the late House of Commons the Ministers could not go on. If that motion

1831. Æt 49.

1831. Æt. 49.

was not the cause of the Dissolution, it was its justification."*

None of the Opposition leaders ventured to touch on the subject afterwards. A direct and violent attack was made on the Chancellor in the Lords, which he, of course, met with equal warmth and a plausible explanation, asserting that his words had been misunderstood, and that he "should have been a dolt to mean what was imputed to him." He was so far successful that Lord Althorp was able to write to Lord Spencer "that the debate in both Houses went off very well."

When the Ministry went up with the Address, the attendance of members was the greatest that Lord Althorp had ever known, the string of carriages extending the whole length of Pall Mall, and, what was a favourable omen for the Reform Bill, when Lord John Russell moved on the 24th for leave to bring in the Bill, the Ministerial side of the House could not contain the members who flocked in to support the Government. Lord John was no longer under the prudential restraints imposed by the presence of an adverse majority. He spoke admirably, and all that was wanting in his former speech he now abundantly supplied. The Bill was read the first time without debate or opposition. It was only on the Second Reading that Lord Althorp was called upon to speak, which he did very sensibly and effectively. I observed

Second Reform Bill brought in by Lord John Russell.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. iv., p. 191.

that his known predilection for popular institutions did not blind him to the risk of their indiscriminate and hasty application to countries unprepared for the change—a truth which all the reasoning of Bentham was employed to dispute, but which has since been too often exemplified in Spain and her South American colonies. 1831. Æt. 49.

The Second Reading passed by a majority of 106, and the Committee was fixed for the 12th of July; and as this is a time when Lord Althorp's letters to his father give more information, both as to his public and private life, than I can collect from any other quarter, I hope that I may be excused if I make him for a brief period his own biographer. Letters from Lord Althorp to his father.

June 25th. "All went off very well in the House of Commons last night. John Russell's speech was capital,* and he did not, I think, lay himself open on more than two points at the utmost. Milton has done an imprudent thing by talking about the Corn Laws without any communication to me. His notice on the subject will be laid hold of, and most probably be injurious to me in the only place where I can be injured, and that is in the House of Lords. So far our work has been very easy, and by activity next week we may get our money votes very forward. I have heard no other news. The physicians are behaving as shabbily as possible about the cholera. Halford gives us his opinion frankly, but the others to whom we unfortunately referred will give no opinion at all, and are determined to throw every possible difficulty and responsibility upon us. We dare not use the ships of war as Lazarettos, because of the great risk of fire, with hemp

* On the motion for leave to bring in the Reform Bill.

1831. Æt. 49.

loose about the decks; and if one caught fire under such circumstances, none could be saved. I believe the notice for taking up *transports*, which has been observed upon at the Stock Exchange, is for the purpose of using them as Lazarettos, but perhaps this had better not be mentioned. You of course know that Lord Robert Spencer died last night."

June 26th. "I only heard late last night that the Belgian business is concluded, and Leopold is therefore King. I do not exactly know the terms, nor do I much care, provided the business is settled. Up to yesterday morning I thought it hopeless to prevent war on the Continent, and that would have brought us into a very dangerous position. Nothing *per contra* can be worse than the House of Lords. All the calculations agree that, putting the Bishops out of the question (and they are not likely to be very favourable), we are in a minority of 22 or 23 of the Peers who have now taken their seats, and you may expect to hear of our being beaten in the House of Lords on Tuesday, on the Bill for appointing Lords Lieutenant of counties in Ireland."

June 30th. "The Duke of Sussex and Stephenson, his deputy, have brought a nest of hornets about them. They have given directions to shoot all dogs found in Hyde Park.* This order has been carried into effect actively, and from thirty to forty dogs have been killed. The reason given for it is, that the dogs disturb the deer, and injure

* There was a debate on the subject on the 18th of July, when Mr. G. Dawson observed that on the day before two dogs had been shot in the Park by the keepers. He said that, besides the inhumanity of the proceeding, great danger was caused to children, who were constantly playing in the part of the Park where the keepers were stationed to shoot the dogs, and that dogs had been shot indiscriminately, from the ladies' lapdogs to Newfoundland dogs. Lord Althorp undertook to inquire into the matter and communicate with the Duke of Sussex (the Ranger). Mr. O'Connell stated that the keepers had no more right to shoot the dogs in the Park than in the highway, unless they were chasing deer.—Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. iv., p. 1406.

1831. Æt. 49.

the does and fawns. A much more serious affair is the scrape we have got into about the Reform Bill, by putting in that the rents should be paid half-yearly. We none of us were aware that the difference between making them to be paid half-yearly instead of quarterly was material, and I gave way too easily to those of my colleagues whose inclination is to restrict the right of voting rather than to extend it. The thing must be rectified instantly, but the blunder will not do us credit.* The Revenue is going on capitally, but I afraid the quarantine will injure it for the remainder of the year. We expect a majority of about 150 on the Reform Bill. I went last night to a concert at St. James's, and heard Paganini; and this having been done, I never wish to hear him again. He certainly made every noise that could be made with a fiddle, and a great many more than I ever heard before, but there was no pretence at a tune."

July 2nd. "Our division on Thursday was a very satisfactory one, for it showed that our men were very steady. The motion of Alderman Wood,† being one of retrench-

* It seems that it was a general custom in leases to insert a clause for the *quarterly* payment of the rent; and this unfortunately had not been explained to the Cabinet by Mr. Gregson, one of the Under Secretaries for the Home Department. He had contented himself by showing that there were difficulties in wording the clause, but did not state their extent or nature, so that Lord Althorp only partially understood him. The object of the alteration was to secure the *bonâ fide* lessee. Mr. Gregson, whom I knew long and well, was a very honest and able man, and, after distinguishing himself at Oxford, had been promoted by Sir Robert Peel to the office he then held. His modesty, or rather his shyness, no doubt was the cause of his not pressing the point in question more forcibly on the Cabinet. He was unjustly charged with intentionally drawing the Government into the blunder. No man was less likely to do so—as Lord Althorp stated when the matter was brought before the House by Mr. Gregson's friends.—AUTHOR.

† The Alderman's motion was for a reduction of all official salaries to their amount in 1797, his object being, I suspect, to satisfy some promise made to his Radical constituents, whom he cultivated more anxiously than was quite consistent with the just discharge of his

1831. Æt. 49.

ment, would have tempted a great many of our former supporters to fly off, and the steadiness of our present supporters proves them to have confidence in us. Last night we did a great deal of business in my line, and I got my taxes through very easily—much better than was the case before the Dissolution. We did not however get through without one scrape.* Stanley moved the renewal of the Irish Arms Bill. This I knew he was going to do, but I did not know that he had altered it and made it, I must admit, one of the most tyrannical measures I ever heard proposed. I was quite astonished, and so was Graham, for not one of us had ever heard that those alterations were to be made in it. This latter part of my letter must, of course be quite secret. We must stand by Stanley, but we must soften down his measure. It is at any rate a great scrape, for O'Connell will have the credit of forcing upon us any modification which is embodied in the Bill. I saw Lord Grey this morning; he had not been consulted more than me. It was imprudent and youthful in Stanley to take such a step, but we must now make the best of it." †

July 4, 1831. "Our accounts from Brussels are less favourable than we expected, and I begin to be appre-

Parliamentary duties. Lord Althorp answered him so conclusively as to obtain the approbation even of Mr. Hume, and the previous question was carried against him by a majority of 203—not, as was generally believed, to the disappointment of the worthy Alderman, whom the Whigs often found a fast friend, and subsequently raised to a Baronetcy, in 1837.—Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. iv., p. 511.—AUTHOR.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. iv., p. 618.

† Mr. Stanley had been carried away too far by his indignation at the proceedings of Mr. O'Connell, and believed Ireland could be governed only by coercion. It was difficult to live amongst the more intelligent and estimable members of society in Dublin at that time without holding this opinion; which however hardly did justice to the Catholics, or made fair allowance for feelings excited by ages of oppression. It was unreasonable to expect them to have the same respect for the law as that prevailing in England. The Bill was subsequently withdrawn.—AUTHOR.

hensive they may refuse Leopold at last. This will be a very dangerous crisis, especially as there is reason to apprehend some serious movements at Paris on the anniversary of last year's Revolution. We commence our Reform debate to-night. It will probably conclude on Wednesday, because it is our wish to get it over as soon as we can, and it must be the interest of the anti-Reformers to get the Bill up into the House of Lords, where they have a chance, as soon as possible. My opinion is, that they will beat us there. Lord Cowper, I hear, has gone over to them, and some others are wavering. I rather also expect that we shall be beaten in the House of Lords to-night on the second reading of the Bill for appointing Lords Lieutenant to the Irish counties. What may be the consequence of this I do not know. It is on the cards, I think, that the King may tell us that we cannot go on, for he is very fearful of a collision between the two Houses, and may think this the best way to avoid it, which it is not. If he does not take this step, I think we must persevere; resignation might be the best course for ourselves, and would certainly have been before the two blunders we have made, one in the Reform Bill, and the other about Stanley's proposition; but it would be so dangerous for the country, that I do not think we should be justified in taking it. The time to do this will be when we are beaten on the Reform Bill. If, however, my colleagues should think otherwise, I shall throw no obstacle in the way of resigning now, or at any time. I hate my situation more and more every day, and really go down to the House of Commons as if I was going to execution." *

July 6, 1831. "My alarm about the Lords Lieutenant Bill in the House of Lords was unfounded, and everything went off very smoothly. Our debate did the same, but I hope it will end to-night. Macaulay's was, perhaps,

* He told me, when his carriage came to fetch him to the House, it was all he could do not to drive right away; but that when once in the *mêlée* in the House he recovered his spirits.—Lord Lyttelton.

1831. Æt. 49.

the best speech I ever heard delivered.* We had on Monday 600 members in the House, of whom 240 are against the Bill."

July 8, 1831. "We have just heard that the jury in Cobbett's case is discharged, as they could not agree upon a verdict. This is a great triumph for him, but it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and we cannot now be any more attacked for not prosecuting. I have just read an account of Cartwright's dinner at Oundle; he made a furious speech against the Bill, and attacked Milton violently, but I see that neither he nor Knightley honoured me with any notice. I hear the goodness of our division has influenced several Peers. Lord Wemyss entered his proxy yesterday, and I think three or four others. I was amused by Fritz having to speak so early. He said all that was right. I was very sorry my speech was gone, for Wetherell ought to have been exposed for his misrepresentations."

July 12, 1831. "I am happy to see that our Belgian negotiation is successfully concluded, and I suppose His Majesty King Leopold will immediately set off for his new dominions. We had a terribly hot dinner at the Mansion House on Saturday. Two or three very absurd things took place. First, Auckland had taken Mrs. Fox Lane there in his carriage, or he went with her in hers, I do not

* What Lord Althorp says of this speech is no more than what was felt by almost every person that heard it—at least, I can answer for myself. It was answered on the next night of the debate skilfully and eloquently by Sir Robert Peel, but time has since refuted many of his arguments, and proved how vain were his fears that the reformed Parliament would be incompatible with a limited monarchy, and an hereditary peerage. He bestowed generous praise on the speech (to my surprise unnoticed by Lord Althorp) of Sir James Mackintosh, in the first night of the debate—one of the last efforts of a philosophical and highly cultivated mind, and not unworthy of his brilliant reputation. It will be read when many speeches, at the time more admired, are forgotten. Poor Sir James looked very ill, and his voice was too weak to be heard with effect. The speech was warmly commended by the best judges.—AUTHOR.

know which, and when they came in they were announced through all the crowd as Lord and Lady Auckland. I never saw anybody show more coolness than she did under those very awkward circumstances. Then Brougham was affronted because Lord Grey was called upon to return thanks for His Majesty's Ministers instead of the Lord Chancellor; and when the Lord Mayor gave the Lord Chancellor's health with a flowing panegyric, he would not make any speech at all, and only returned thanks in quite the ordinary way. He was so angry, that the Duke of Richmond had great difficulty in persuading him not to propose the health of Paganini. Denman introduced me to Lady Denman, and I sat next her. Her father, Mr. Vevers, is one of my most eager clerical supporters in Northamptonshire (the clergyman of Kettering and Stoke-Albany), so I made the agreeable as much as I could, when, to my dismay, she said to me, 'Pray will you show me Lord Althorp, as he used very often to dine with us.' This last is a mistake, for I never dined with Denman in my life. 1831. Æt. 49.

"I am to have a great meeting to-day at the Foreign Office, having no room large enough, and in the evening we expect a severe battle on the wine duties. I conclude Fritz will be here, and hope so, as it will be a trial of strength.

"I have forgot to tell you that I am sitting for my bust, or rather for a statue which is to be erected by my constituents at Northampton. A native artist has been selected of the name of Butler, a young man who was a pupil of Bailey's. I do not know what the statue will turn out to be, and I am not much of a judge of the bust, but I should say it will turn out—the bust I mean—something extraordinary. I am sure it is more like than any bust I ever saw, and it appears to me to be very spirited and good as a work of art; the only two persons who have seen it are Poulett Thomson and Wickham,* who read to me the

* The late Mr. Henry Lewis Wickham—the private secretary of

1831. Æt. 49.

papers I want to hear while I am sitting, by which I lose no time. They are both travelled men, and I suppose have some knowledge of these things, and they both think as highly of the performance as I do. Butler speaks very confidently of his power of working the marble; I speak, of course, only of the model in clay. If he really can use his chisel as he appears to be able to use the instruments for modelling, he will make his fortune by this fancy of my constituents." *

Committal of the Reform Bill.

The Bill had now arrived at the stage towards which its opponents looked forward with hope and its supporters with alarm; for both had felt throughout that the greatest struggle would be in Committee, where in a case like this the advantage was decidedly with the Opposition. On the 4th of July Lord John Russell moved for the Committee, and then at once were revealed some of the obstacles which the Government had to encounter; a vigorous attempt being made on plausible grounds for counsel to be heard against the disfranchisement of Appleby, one of the boroughs in Schedule A. The real object was delay; and if the motion had succeeded, each

Lord Althorp, and afterwards chairman of the Board of Stamps—a pleasing and accomplished gentleman, author of an "Enquiry into Hannibal's Route across the Alps," and only son of the Right Honourable William Wickham, M.P., our Minister with the Allied Armies in Germany and Italy, and subsequently Chief Secretary in Ireland. Mr. Wickham died in 1864.—AUTHOR.

* Owing to some quarrels between the subscribers on the spot, and perhaps some difficulties as to the site, the plan was never carried into effect. Mr. Butler, however, completed the bust, which is an excellent likeness, and it was, I believe, presented to Lord Althorp. It is now in the possession of Earl Spencer, who also has a bust of his uncle, by Francis, a sculptor at one time well known from his busts of Whig statesmen.—AUTHOR.

of the boroughs in the two Schedules would have claimed the same privilege, and the Committee must have broken down under the infliction. The argument urged in support of the motion, on which most stress seemed to be laid, was, that the Bill was one of pains and penalties. Lord Althorp replied, "that no Bill could be so called with any show of justice which had but one end—the public benefit. It had been asked, how can you attempt to decide on the case of this borough if you refuse to hear the petitioners through their counsel? The answer is simple: You have the evidence furnished by the Population Returns; and if witnesses are examined at the Bar, they must necessarily, if not engaged in taking a census of the population, be unable to furnish as much evidence as we have already. We have all the facts of the case before us on the Table, and I therefore contend that the members of this House are more competent to argue and decide the question, and it is more their duty to do so, than to call in counsel to argue it for them." Mr. Roebuck observes, that "the answer thus given to the arguments of the Opposition was accurate and sufficient, and stated by Lord Althorp with simplicity and effect." In this opinion he observes, "the House agreed in spite of a confident speech of Mr. Croker in reply; the motion was negatived by a majority of ninety-seven."* 1831. Æt. 49.

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., pp. 185–6. The author has introduced Lord Althorp's speech into his text, which has encouraged me to transfer it to mine.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

It was now hoped that the House would at once go into Committee. Sir Robert Peel had agreed with Lord Althorp to raise no further opposition; but his followers were irritated by their defeat, and on the frivolous pretext of some noisy interruption to the speech of Mr. Gordon,* they insisted on an adjournment. It was hardly eleven o'clock, and Lord Althorp, after a fruitless attempt to induce Mr. Gordon to resume his speech, refused to yield to such an unreasonable proposal. A scene then took place to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. The Opposition members continued for nearly eight hours to make motions for adjournment, hoping always, although defeated by immense majorities and abandoned by Sir Robert Peel, that they should force the Ministry to give way. Lord Althorp felt that on his firmness that night the future of the Bill might depend. He persisted in pressing for the Committee, but promised that it should be merely *pro formâ*. The Opposition would accept no compromise. They taunted him with having made similar motions when out of office, which gave him the advantage of saying, amidst loud cheers, that he had never once moved an adjournment for a party purpose, and very seldom supported one—and he would resist the course now pursued to the utmost. Several divisions followed

* Mr. Gordon, M.P. for Dundalk—a borough under the influence of Lord Roden. He was a Lieutenant in the Navy, and of some note as an orator at religious meetings in the Metropolis. He succeeded better there than in the House. He afterwards married a daughter of Mr. S. Smith, the great city banker.—AUTHOR.

in broad daylight. It was near half-past seven in the morning when Sir John Brydges, an old Tory, threw ridicule on his party by proposing to draw lots whether or not to adjourn, and this proposal being refused, the last division took place, being 1831. Æt. 49.

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes . . . . . | 24 |
| Noes . . . . . | 187 |
| Majority . . . | 163 |

Sir Charles Wetherell then interposed with an assurance (which no one could believe) of his desire to facilitate and not impede the great question of Reform, and the offer made by Lord Althorp and rejected early in the evening was now accepted.* The Speaker left the Chair amidst such deafening cries of the Ministerialists as seemed to compensate their leaders for the loss of a night's rest.

The next day there was a general feeling of humiliation among the Tories at the disgrace into which they had been driven by the hot-headed zealots of their party. Lord Althorp, in a letter to his father, said of their conduct, "the enemy have injured themselves very much; they will

* I was in the House the whole night, and voted in every Division. According to my recollection, it was believed that what caused the Opposition at last to give way was the knowledge that the Ministerial Whips were about to send out for a fresh relay of Liberal members who had had the advantage of a night's rest. 'Possibly this was suggested by the appearance of Cutler Ferguson in the House, who, after enjoying a good night's rest, came down after seven o'clock for the purpose of putting down his name on the List for presenting Petitions (as it was necessary then to do very early), and whose astonishment on seeing the Speaker in the chair caused much amusement.—Lord Belper.

1831. Æt. 49.

certainly quarrel one with another, for Peel acted very shabbily by them. He cannot lead an Opposition, partly because he has not decision enough, and now he has lost all hold on them. The consequence will be that their opposition will be vexatious, but unskilful and inefficient. There never was such a blunder as their fighting last night's battle. They had no case for it, and the proceeding itself, however good the case may be, is always unpopular."*

Early in the evening, after a speech from Mr. Gordon, not of a degree of merit to redeem the hours wasted on the preceding night, the House went into Committee.

This was a decided step in advance, as in bringing the differences between the two great parties more distinctly to an issue, it gradually foreshadowed the fate of the Bill; but the contest was protracted to an almost unexampled length, and marked by all the offensive characteristics of Parliamentary warfare; every clause, nay, almost every letter of the Bill being (as Mr. Roebuck says) "strenuously cavilled at, criticised and abused, so that for the historian to follow this continued opposition through its countless repetitions would be impossible, and if possible, useless." Could Mr. Roebuck have seen any merit in the Whigs, he would have added, that proportionably great was the praise due to those who baffled and overcame such opposition. The labour, indeed, of the Ministers who carried the Bill through the

* Letter to Earl Spencer, 13 July, 1831, M.S.

Committee can only be justly appreciated by those who witnessed it. At first Lord John Russell had the assistance of Lord Althorp, but after some weeks he could bear up no longer against the constant fatigue, and the management devolved entirely on the latter, who indeed had previously worked with him in such perfect harmony that, but from my knowledge of the fact, I should not have discovered that Lord Althorp had ever parted with any portion of his Leadership.

1831. Æt. 49.

Management devolves on Lord Althorp.

The Disfranchisement Clauses (A and B) received the first shock of the Tory attack, and were a fortnight under consideration. No part of the Bill was so hotly contested, or so troublesome to defend, for the case of each borough being taken in succession involved many questions of local statistics, which if Lord John had not himself prepared the Schedules, he must often have been at a loss to answer. He was on all occasions supported by Lord Althorp, and night after night were they for eight hours at least questioned and cross-questioned to meet objections raised not only by the members specially interested in the unfortunate boroughs, but by Sir Charles Wetherell and Sir Edward Sugden, who seemed to be counsel in every case; and, as if this was not enough, all the ingenuity and malignity of Mr. Croker were employed to mystify the calculations on which the Schedules rested, or to show that other boroughs under the influence of the Whig Patrons had been unfairly passed over. He referred openly to Lord Lansdowne, observing, that "Calne

1831. Æt. 49.

was the key-stone of the arch," and this became a favourite saying among his party.

The Ministerial members heard these taunts with indignation; and it was not without difficulty that Lord Althorp could at times obtain a fair hearing for some of his opponents, who expressed their feelings at the loss of what had long been regarded amongst them as private property in violent and unmeasured terms. Lord Althorp's sense of justice made him give way in two instances, much to the dissatisfaction of his supporters. The latter shared the popular excitement too much to deal with these points impartially. In a letter of the 28th July, during the debates on Schedule B, Lord Althorp, after observing that he stood his work well, as the hot weather did better for the House of Commons than the cold, because the windows were kept open, and gave a good supply of fresh air, says, "the progress of the Committee is terribly slow, and the people are, I hear, becoming very impatient; their fury will be directed against the Opposition; but they are also beginning to blame me for not doing that which is impossible—for it is absolutely impossible to expedite the Bill. Practically, the clause containing Schedule A is fifty-seven clauses; and if one looks at it in this way, ten days is not a great deal to take for fifty-seven disputed clauses, and certainly the case of each borough is equivalent to a clause in an ordinary Bill. It is not quite agreeable to be found fault with by one's friends; but there is this advantage in the impatience of the

people, that it will prove to the House of Lords that the feeling in favour of the Bill is not diminished, and will prevent them from delivering themselves about this as they are constantly doing." 1831. Æt. 49.

The enfranchisement clauses, C, D, and E, being necessarily favourable to the large towns, rather than to the landed interest, did not restore the temper of the Opposition, and were in many instances violently opposed. Lord John Russell in vain urged that population was not the only principle of the enfranchisement, wealth and property being the prevailing requisites. Sir Robert Peel, untaught by the consequences of his former opposition to the enfranchisement of Birmingham and Leeds, continued his hostile course, and said that he should prefer perpetual exclusion from office to the respon sibility of the Bill.

It was not until the 10th of August (the twentieth day of the sitting of the Committee), that the last of these clauses was agreed to, amidst angry altercations which pressed more sorely on the Ministry from the critical state of foreign politics at the time, as appears from the following letter of Lord Althorp :—

August 8th. "I have not had a moment's time to write to you for some days. Our foreign affairs are in a very critical state, and the Opposition do not appear inclined to let us alone to manage them. I must try again to persuade Sir Richard Vyvyan not to bring on his motion tomorrow, but I fear I shall not succeed. I fully believe the French Government are acting in good faith, but the

1831. Æt. 49.

danger is that when once their troops are in Belgium they will not be strong enough to recall them. Leopold writes from his army in good spirits, and says that, if he can get a few days for preparation, he can beat the Dutch without assistance. Be this as it may, he wrote to France for assistance, and assistance he will have; and there can be no doubt that the Dutch will be driven back. Hitherto we have had no reason whatever to complain of the French, and I do not think much reason now. I was afraid that the King of Holland was engaged in some intrigue, for it appeared hardly possible that he should have broken the armistice without relying upon some external support; it appears now, however, as if he had, and I feel pretty confident that peace will be preserved. The King of Holland has behaved so ill on this occasion, that he has set us free from all difficulties as far as he is concerned, and the whole business may tend to a more rapid and satisfactory settlement than could have been made if these events had not occurred."

In justice to Sir Richard Vyvyan, I am glad to state that he yielded to Lord Althorp's request, and postponed his notice.

It appears that two days later (on the 10th), the order of the day for the Committee was moved by Lord Althorp; and from that time he seems to have taken the Bill, to use his own language, into his own hands, with Lord John Russell's full concurrence, and probably at his request. One thing is certain, that Lord Althorp showed the same readiness to take up the Bill when Lord John could not go on with it, that he did to give it up to him in the first instance; he continued to bear the whole burden and responsibility of the management for nearly a month; and

although the debates had less of personal bitterness, they called for the same intimate acquaintance with the measure as had been required before, and even more frequent explanation. They embraced also a wider range of subjects. Moreover the machinery of the Bill especially involved considerations of law that gave an excuse to Sir Edward Sugden and Sir Charles Wetherell to raise innumerable objections, with a pertinacity seldom allowed but in Courts of Justice; indeed Lord Althorp was thus forced on one occasion to make as many as twenty speeches on the same night. 1831. Æt. 49.

A few days after Lord Althorp's resumption of the leadership he had the mortification of a defeat, the only one that the Ministers suffered during the proceedings on the Bill. It was no surprise to him, for he had learnt, soon after the Second Reading, that an attempt would be made to introduce a clause giving the county franchise to tenants-at-will paying 50*l.* per annum for their holdings. An amendment to this effect was moved by Lord Chandos on the 18th of August, and the Whig Squires united with the Tories to support it. They received also the aid of Mr. Hume and the Radicals. The latter, independently of their partiality for the largest extension of the franchise, looked forward to the time when changes in agriculture would alter the existing relations between landlord and tenant, and not only relieve the latter from any dependence on the former, but often give them opposite interests. This time however, after an interval of more than The Chandos clause.

1831. Æt. 49. a quarter of a century, has not arrived, nor can be expected so long as land yields a higher relative profit to the tenant than to the landlord. An excellent speech was made by Lord Althorp in reply; and his predictions of the consequences of the measure proposed have since been fully verified. He was the only member of the Government who took part in the debate.

Lord Althorp's letters to his father were suspended for more than a fortnight. On the 26th of August he again takes up his pen.

"I have lately been a very bad correspondent; but, since I have taken the management of the Reform Bill into my own hands, I have been so overwhelmed with work that I have not had a moment to spare. We are going on slowly, but well, in the House of Commons. I fear, however, we have but little chance in the House of Lords, making allowance even for any number of Coronation Peers which is consistent with decency. The danger from the rejection of the Bill, and consequent dissolution of the Ministry, is great; but the relief to me will be so enormous, that my patriotism is not sufficient to induce me to look forward to it with any other feeling but that of hope. I do not indeed consider the danger to be so great as some other people do. It will undoubtedly be very difficult to govern; but the people are so accustomed to obedience to the law, that I do not apprehend any actual tumult. I keep quite well. I was knocked up a good deal last night, for I had to speak so very often, and in consequence I think I may have been in bed a quarter of an hour or so before I went to sleep; except in this instance, I fall asleep the instant I am in bed, and do not wake till I am called. I hope we have weathered the danger of war.

"The French Government have ordered their troops from Belgium, but I believe the whole of them will not be withdrawn, as Leopold has begged some of them may be retained for his protection. I suspect he pretends to be more alarmed than he is, and wishes to curry favour with France by making this application, with a view of promoting his marriage with the French Princess." 1831. Æt. 49.

The "hard work" on the 24th to which Lord Althorp here refers, was the discussion of the 10*l.* franchise, which lasted three nights, without throwing much light on the great difficulties involved in it. Neither the Ministry nor the Opposition seem to have been adequately informed as to the character and extent of the new constituency thus called into existence, and the technical objections raised by the Tory lawyers, though not without ingenuity, have long lost all interest. Lord Althorp spoke at least eleven times in one debate, chiefly in reply; and his spirit and readiness in what might have been considered an unequal contest, greatly pleased the Whig country gentlemen. It must be confessed, however, that he had also to complain of some well-meaning but not judicious Reformers, who, as the Bill advanced, endeavoured to force their own peculiar views on the Government, by amendments which were always defeated, though not without a serious consumption of time. Lord Milton erred the most in this respect; and, as he sometimes chose to make these motions from the Ministerial Bench, sitting very near Lord Althorp, it gave as much annoyance to the Ministers as encouragement to the Opposition.

1831. Æt. 49. I recollect the Lord Chancellor addressing to him a letter of remonstrance, which sent him for a time into the country, for he said that he could not listen tongue-tied to proceedings of which he disapproved. This frequent interruption of the business irritated the Reformers out of doors, and the displeasure they expressed against the Government on this account was mistaken by some of the more violent Tories for an angry feeling towards the Bill. Sir Charles Wetherell said that "he had watched the signs of the times. He saw the opinion of the country was changed, and the current running in a contrary direction to that in which it had for some time run, and he could no longer be called 'factious or refractory in his opposition.'" * Several attempts had already been made to accelerate the progress of the Bill by more frequent sittings, without effect. Mr. Hume, at the instigation of some of his Middlesex constituents, brought the subject again before the House in a very long speech, asking the House to allow five days in the week, from twelve o'clock, exclusively to the Committee. He met with considerable support, but not from Lord Althorp, whose explanation, candidly pointing out the causes of the delay and its consequences, met with almost universal acquiescence. The Tories, not less than the Whigs, seemed panic-struck at the risk of his withdrawal from the charge of the Bill, and the two parties vied with each other

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. vi., p. 718.

in praising him. Sir Robert Peel observed, that he had never seen business conducted in a manner more entitling the Minister conducting it to every deference. "Let the noble Lord only persevere in the course he is now taking—let him appeal to the House in the way he now appealed to it—and he (Sir Robert Peel) would venture to say that not a single member would be found to oppose him." Mr. Charles Wynn added, "that the moderation and temper with which Lord Althorp had endeavoured to expedite the passing of the Bill was the only efficient way in which it could be expedited; any other mode of expediting it would generate a factious spirit, and only increase the delay." Similar and warmer testimonies to the merit of Lord Althorp were given from his own supporters. The motion was of course withdrawn. 1831. Æt. 49.

The feeling thus expressed towards Lord Althorp was no more than what was generally entertained throughout the country. In a MS. Diary kept by an intelligent observer of public events at that day I find a similar account of the debate, with this addition;—"Lord Althorp, although without any considerable powers, has taken nearly the whole responsibility and labour of the detailed discussion of the Bill, and he has done it in such a way as to win the esteem and conciliate the feelings of the whole House. Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Wynn, Lord Ebrington, and Labouchere, all spoke the same language. Lord Althorp is a perfectly English character—an admirable specimen of that calm, unpretending good

1831. Æt. 49. sense, excellent temper, and gentlemanlike feelings by which it is often distinguished." *

After this debate the business of the Committee proceeded without any unreasonable interruption, the Tory leaders, such as Sir Robert Peel and his immediate friends, being really desirous Lord Althorp should have no further ground of complaint. It was fortunate they were so, as even his iron frame was yielding to the unintermitting pressure put upon it, for when not at work in the Committee, his spare nights were usually employed with some legal friends in adapting the Bill to the alterations made by the amendments. He was absent from indisposition on the 30th, when the Freeman's Abolition Clause—one of the most important parts of the Bill—occupied the House to a late hour, and was most ably argued by Lord John Russell, who took his place for that night. It appears from the following letter that he resumed his post on the 1st of September—a day which he would have much preferred to pass at Althorp or Wiseton, rather than in the House.

Sept. 2nd. "To-day's paper will show you that I am in a state of activity again. Last night† was rather too hard work for a convalescent to begin with, and I was completely tired at its close, but I am not the worse for it to-day. I still keep at the top of the ladder; when I last saw you we agreed there was great danger that I

* MS. Diary of the late Mr. Mallet, a son of the celebrated Mallet de Pan. Mr. Mallet was not favourable to the Reform Bill.

† On clauses 23 and 24, for the appointment of Commissioners to divide the country and settle the boundaries of Boroughs.—AUTHOR.

should have a great fall. I am surprised I have not had one yet; but I now begin to think I shall hold my popularity till we are all turned out together, and that is all, as far as I am concerned, that I can wish. The immense practice in speaking that I have had has of course increased my facility both as to remembering the arguments of my opponents and as to expressing my own answers, very much; and I have, as you see, taken the whole debate on our side into my own hands. John Russell has shown great temper and good feeling; so far from objecting to my taking the business from him, he urges me to do so. Few people in his circumstances would have felt so properly." 1831. Æt. 49.

This dreary warfare was happily now drawing to a close; and on the 7th of September, after thirty-nine days' sitting, the Committee finished their labours.

The Reform Bill passes the Commons—and is read the first time in the Lords.

Three days were given to the Report, and as many to the last stage of the Bill, during which the whole measure was re-argued, as if there had been no discussion on the Second Reading, and on the 21st of September the Bill finally passed. The sickly countenances of the members present showed how thoroughly both parties were exhausted by the contest.

The next day nearly two hundred members, with Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell at their head, the latter bearing the Reform Bill in his hand, appeared at the bar of the House of Lords. A large attendance of Peers, besides an absolute throng of strangers, showed that they were expected. It was difficult to say whether Lord John delivered his

1831. Æt. 49.

message, or the Lord Chancellor communicated it, to the House with the greater solemnity of tone and manner. Hansard truly observes "that these words of mere form and ceremony, which no one perhaps ever thought of listening to before, were on this occasion heard with breathless attention." The evident impression made by the scene on the Tory Peers present, encouraged Ministers to think more favourably of their prospects. The Second Reading was fixed for the 22nd instant.

Rejoicing in the country.

Out of the House, the cause of Reform now stood on the highest pinnacle of the public favour; the people regarded the Bill as safe; a general illumination to celebrate the passing of it in the Commons took place in London with the sanction of the Lord Mayor, and no public event in my day, since the battle of Waterloo, has called forth such warm and general expressions of delight. Unfortunately, in these rejoicings the populace forgot the respect due to the hero of Waterloo. His windows, and those of some of his political friends, were broken, much to the regret of the Ministers. Among the higher classes, both in London and the Provinces, there was of course no lack of dinners and after-dinner speeches. The banquet given by the Reform members, at the Thatched House, on the 26th, to Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell, probably far excelled all the other entertainments of a similar character. It was attended by almost every supporter of the Bill in the House, Sir Francis Burdett officiating as Chairman, in which capacity he was

Banquet given by Reform members.

almost unrivalled.* When Lord Althorp entered the room, he was almost oppressed by the congratulations and thanks of the company, as if all of them were under personal obligations to him; and the praise he afterwards received from the Chair seemed to find an echo in every heart. He wrote to his father that even at Northampton he had never met with such a welcome. His short speech in reply was so vehemently cheered that I am tempted to insert it here :— 1831. Æt. 49.

"I have never been ambitious of power, or of high degree, but I have been, and am still, ambitious of that popularity which is the true result of an honest and consistent discharge of public duty. With this ambition, you will judge what my feelings are on the present occasion, when I am honoured by such a mark of distinction from gentlemen who have been selected from the body of my fellow-countrymen as the known and avowed supporters of those measures upon which—it is vain to conceal the fact—the happiness, the prosperity, and the future welfare of the country depend. I hope I am not vain when I say, that I do feel proud, in the highest degree, of such a proof of your approbation. I hope and trust I have done my best. I am sure I have endeavoured to do so with regard to the great measure of Reform; but if that measure has at least to a great extent succeeded, how has that happy result been attained? It has been attained by your assistance and by the support

* Sir Francis Burdett's popular manners and vivacity of expression gave him eminent success at all political meetings, and not the least, when of a social and convivial character. It was very difficult not to sympathise with his genial and happy remarks. He particularly shone on this occasion, for he both loved and respected Lord Althorp, who in return entertained a very friendly feeling towards him, and only regretted that the good qualities he really possessed should often be grievously misapplied.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

of the people of England; and I should be wanting in justice if I did not say, that such a result could not have been attained except by the most extraordinary and unparalleled exertion on your part, by the steady attendance of the gentlemen I have now the honour of addressing, during a long and tedious sitting, throughout the whole of which we were compelled to present to our enemies such a front as proved to them, that, though they might protract the struggle, they never could hope to gain the slightest advantage in the contest." *

The evening passed off with great spirit. "God save the King" was of course enthusiastically received, and the whole of the company joined in the chorus—

Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks.

The King, I have no doubt, was highly pleased with the account; and it may here be mentioned that pains were taken that he should be made fully acquainted with any circumstances likely to strengthen his interest in Reform.

These manifestations of the feelings of the country were misunderstood by the Peers. A large majority of them, whilst admitting the general excitement, attributed it to the inflammatory arts of the Ministry, assisted by the commercial distress at home and political disturbances abroad, with the removal of which they confidently expected popular

* The honours paid to Lord John Russell on the same evening will no doubt be recorded when to praise him as he deserves can be done without the imputation of flattery. May that time be far distant!—AUTHOR.

opinion would return to its former channels. Parliamentary Reform had few cordial supporters even among the Whig Peers. Lord Carnarvon, a violent Whig, had always been opposed to it, and so was Lord Grenville. Independently of party spirit, which in the Lords had more of personal feeling than in the Commons, the whole body of the Tory Peers had an inherent and honest aversion to any great constitutional changes. Unlike the Anti-Reformers in the House of Commons, they were in a very decided majority; and, conscious of their strength, to yield against their own convictions to what they deemed the revolutionary policy of the Commons, appeared to them a mean betrayal of their legislative functions. 1831. Æt. 49.

Unfortunately the Duke of Wellington, so wise in most respects, was slow in discovering the signs of the times; and it is not surprising that, under such a leader, still possessing almost unbounded influence, the largest section of the Peerage was predetermined to reject the Bill.

Debate on the Bill in the Lords.

Under these circumstances the Second Reading was debated during five nights, and it must be admitted that, whatever weaknesses or prejudices may be pointed out in the speeches of some of the Tory Peers, there was a grand display of wit, rhetoric, and constitutional knowledge on both sides. As a debate, it presented more uniform excellence than that in the Commons, but the latter was more bright and varied in character, so that whilst one was most praised by the critics, the other most

1831. Æt. 49.

interested the country. Lord Grey's opening speech was very good, but did not quite satisfy his admirers. It appeared to me less spirited and forcible than might have been expected from his long-tried zeal for Reform; but, alas! some thirty years had passed since, in the prime of manhood, he had made the question his own, forcing it on an adverse and impatient House of Commons, with the cold and divided support of his party; but all his wonted fires glowed in his reply, which was generally admitted to be magnificent. The group of young members of the House of Commons collected behind the throne were, in the warmth of their admiration, with difficulty restrained from cheering. The most elaborate and highly finished speeches, however, were those of the Lord Chancellor and of Lord Lyndhurst. Each was beautifully artistic, the latter being a model of persuasive oratory, and set off by every advantage of voice and manner. As I listened to him, I forgot the imputations against his sincerity, and might have believed him when he indignantly repudiated Lord Grey's charge of his formerly holding opinions favourable to Reform, adding, emphatically, with a loud voice, "I never was a Whig;" but the Attorney-General (Denman), who stood next to me, pressed my arm tightly, saying, "Villain! No, he was a Democrat. When I was a young man, he took me to a dinner of the friends of the people. The violence of the speeches startled me, and I could not help observing that I thought his friends went too far, for there must

be some honest Tories. 'No,' he (Lord Lyndhurst) answered, 'it is impossible; an honest Tory is a contradiction in terms.'" * 1831. Æt. 49.

What was thought of the Lord Chancellor's speech appears from the following extract from one of Lord Althorp's letters, written a few hours after the debate, when the impression produced by the wand of the magician was still fresh:—"All

* Lord Grey had expected that, in appointing Lord Lyndhurst Chief Baron, he had withdrawn him from politics; and, indeed, the latter intimated to Lord Essex at the time that his position was quite changed, and he could no longer act against Earl Grey. He was, I suspect, "in utrumque paratus." I must admit that, whatever may be said against his political morality, there is no doubt of his wonderful abilities, and of his accomplishments as a speaker. He argued the case of the Tories against the Bill much better than Sir Robert Peel did. He was, indeed, always a complete master of his argument, his premises being so skilfully laid that his conclusions were almost irresistible: nothing could be more clear, distinct, and logical, than his handling of a subject,—at least, according to his own view of it; but he grappled with no difficulties that he was not sure to overcome. Hence his decisions (as I am assured by the most eminent advocate of the Chancery Bar) are of little use as precedents, and certainly inferior to Lord Brougham's, who boldly, and often successfully, unravelled the web of sophistry and technicality that surrounds so many questions of law. Lord Brougham once told me that he considered Lord Lyndhurst a much overrated man, which was certainly true, when the latter was estimated higher than himself; for, neither as a law reformer, nor as a statesman in an enlarged sense of the word, could there be any comparison between them. Lord Lyndhurst's attention, indeed, was confined to mere party questions, which he viewed only through the medium of party; so that his speeches against Catholic Emancipation in 1827, and for it in 1830, were equally eloquent and effective. His advocacy in this respect, combined with his great abilities, made him a most agreeable and useful colleague. His boldness and sagacity were undeniable; and those qualities might be traced in his countenance, which was highly intellectual and almost handsome, though it bore a remarkable resemblance to that of Mephistopheles in "Retsch's Outlines of Faust." Among his many natural gifts, the rich, melodious tone of his voice was not the least.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

agree that it was the best he ever made. Grey and Holland both say it was superhuman—that it united all the excellences of the ancient with those of modern oratory, and that the action and delivery were as much applauded as the speech itself." Lord Holland expressed himself quite as warmly to me to the same effect. He observed that he had not heard so fine a speech even from his uncle Charles (Fox), and this was his idea of the perfection of public speaking. The only fault that I perceived in it at the time, was his insinuating that he was not perfectly satisfied with the measure; a short-sighted device to which he resorted, with the view of persuading some of the Tories to vote for the Second Reading, in the hope that they would have his assistance to amend the Bill in the Committee. Not a single vote, however, was thus gained, and he most undeservedly became suspected of coldness in the cause of Reform; indeed, overtures were in consequence made to him to join the Tories. There were some faint cheers at the announcement of the majority (41) against the Bill, but the general aspect along the Tory benches was rather of anxiety than exultation.

Its rejection.

In a few hours a feeling of anger and indignation showed itself among the public, that must have shaken the resolution of the Tory Peers. An immediate contest with the House of Commons, if not with the people, became inevitable; for the Liberal members assembled at once at the Thatched House, and, after some violent speeches, determined that

Lord Ebrington,* the member for Devonshire, a nobleman of great weight in the House for his judgment, disinterestedness, and spirit, as well as for the decided part he had long taken in support of Liberal measures, should move a vote of confidence in the Ministers on the following Monday. 1831. Æt. 49.

The Cabinet met the same afternoon, and agreed to come to no formal decision until the result of the motion was known. They were unfortunately disturbed at their sitting by a noise in the street from a large concourse of people who had followed the Lord Chancellor, and afterwards waited to escort him to his home in Berkeley Square, much to the discomposure of one section of the Government, to which it appeared the sign of coming troubles.† They apprehended that a general rising among the middle and lower classes would be the inevitable result of a quarrel between the two Houses, and hesitated as to how far any Government was justified in exposing the country to the risk of such a calamity. The Cabinet, in fact, was in imminent danger Excitement in the country and in the Commons.

* Viscount Ebrington was one of Lord Althorp's earliest and most intimate friends. His advanced views in politics had long kept him out of the representation of his native county (Devon), where his family possessed great estates, and were deservedly popular. I recollect once seeing him an unsuccessful candidate on the hustings at Exeter, and was much impressed by his fine person and noble demeanour, which gave his spirited addresses additional effect on an admiring auditory. He looked quite the model of a young English nobleman. His enthusiasm for liberty was not confined to words, as, in the beginning of the Peninsular war, he joined the Spanish Patriots as a Volunteer, and served some time in their ranks. I had the hono[r] of being admitted to his friendship, and can conscientiously say [t] he had one of the purest minds I have ever known.—AUTHOR.

† Letter from Viscount Althorp to Earl Spencer, MS.

1831. Æt. 49. of dissolution, as may be inferred from the following letters :—

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL SPENCER.

"*October 8th.*

"I begin my note not able to give you any information beyond what is contained in the papers, as I have not yet seen any of my colleagues. We are to have a Cabinet at three, and if I have time afterwards, I will write to you again. It however appears to me, that a majority of 41 is not to be coped with. I think the reasonable part of the country would not support us in making fifty peers. I am sure neither Grey nor myself can stay in unless we have a reasonable prospect of carrying a measure as large as the one we have lost; and I do not see how we can say that we have a reasonable prospect of doing this in the face of such a majority. The great difficulty of the case is, that the ordinary rule of going straight forward appears to me not to be quite certainly applicable to it, though I think it probably is. According to this ordinary rule, we ought to resign. I am inclined to think, indeed, that this is the only mode of carrying Reform. I think Reform will never pass the House of Lords unless it is brought forward by its enemies, as the Catholic Question was. There is a great meeting of Reforming Members of the House of Commons at the Thatched House to-day, Ebrington is at the head of it, and much will depend on their decision—at least, much may depend upon it. I am sure our Cabinet will break to pieces; but if I saw my own course clearly, which at present I do not, I should, without considering this, take my own line and form a Government, if the means were placed at my disposal, whichever of my colleagues resigned; or, if the means were not placed at my disposal, state that this was the reason why I did not do so. An additional difficulty in my way is, that there is no human being on whose judgment I feel sufficient reliance

to take his guidance in the present crisis. I will send this letter, and write you another if I have time." 1831. Æt. 49.

"*October 10th.*

"We are in a state of high excitement; hitherto all has been quiet here, but the great meeting in Marylebone has adjourned to Hyde Park, and they are there so near the Duke of Wellington's house, that I think there is considerable danger. The only riot we have heard of is the one at Derby, and I hope that is put down. All accounts concur in saying that our quitting office will be the signal for general confusion. The Tories are now very much frightened by what they have done; and the leaders of the political unions are equally frightened, as they find they have set a machine in motion which they cannot control. The Tories wanted to move some Reform resolutions in the House of Lords, but they cannot agree among themselves, and it will probably come to nothing. The speech I have to make to-night is terrific; one word in its wrong place may produce the most disastrous consequences. If we can weather the next fortnight without a convulsion, everything will then do. But just now the crisis is rather awful. There will, I have no doubt, be a great mob in Palace Yard to-day. It is quite wonderful, but I believe the people never had an idea that the Bill was in the slightest danger."

Lord Althorp's anxiety about his speech was probably shared by his colleagues, for it had been agreed that he should be the only Minister to take part in the debate, a precaution fully warranted by the conflicting opinions in the Cabinet, but throwing on him a painful degree of responsibility. The King had already announced to Earl Grey his

1831. Æt. 49.

desire that the Ministers should remain in office, so that, the principal object of the motion having been attained, the Ministers were little less anxious than the King that the debate should give no excuse for an increase of the prevailing agitation.

This, however, they scarcely ventured to hope. Lord Althorp found the House in a state of excitement, hardly surpassed on the day of the first reading of the Reform Bill; the Ministerialists being most angry and indignant. It was in vain that Lord Ebrington, with whom he had been in constant communication, made a most temperate, firm, and judicious speech; and that Mr. Goulburn's reply betrayed the dread of the Tory leaders of any lengthened discussion. Mr. Macaulay and Sir Charles Wetherell led the way for a fierce contest, which lasted several hours; and Lord Althorp found himself at its close obliged not only to answer the various attacks which had been made on the Government, but to respond to the zeal so generously displayed by his party, and yet without giving any just cause of offence to the House of Lords. His triumph was complete in the estimation of his friends at the time; and even after the lapse of so many years, his speech will, I hope, be read with interest.

Lord Althorp's speech in the House.

"I feel," he said, "all the difficulties of my situation. I feel that this motion involves the conduct and character of the Government; and I therefore waited till the other members had delivered their opinions, wishing to learn the

feelings and opinions of the House before I stated my own views, or before I undertook the defence of any of our measures. I have now heard the opinions of gentlemen, and will take the opportunity of saying a few words. From the opinions I have heard, it is stated that the conduct of the Government has not been such as to deserve the confidence of the House. The right hon. Baronet* has adverted to the financial measures, and to the foreign policy, and to that still more important subject, the present state of the public feeling, for which he holds His Majesty's Government responsible. As to our financial measures, I will not now enter into any detail respecting them. Certainly, what I proposed on that subject did not meet with the approbation of the House; but I have the satisfaction, nevertheless, to know, that several of my propositions were attended with beneficial consequences. It has been said, that the remission of the tax on coals has not been productive of any good effect. In the immediate neighbourhood of town, I allow that it has not; but in the remoter districts prices have fallen. Then, with respect to the remission of the tax on printed cottons. I have the satisfaction of knowing that in the manufacturing districts it has had a great and beneficial effect. So that, admitting that the larger portion of the measures which I proposed did not experience the concurrence of the House, yet others have given much relief. On our foreign policy I will also abstain from entering into details. But we have the satisfaction to say, that we have preserved peace. One of the first pledges that we gave on entering upon office was, that we would endeavour to do so. We have redeemed that pledge, and there is no danger whatever that the present peace will be broken. As to the other most important point to which the right hon. Baronet alluded, namely, the present state of public feeling, I maintain that for that state the present Government are not accountable. When we came into office, we found a strong and universal desire existing for Parlia-

1831. Æt. 49.

* Sir Robert Peel.

1831. Æt. 49.

mentary Reform. That desire had been increasing for many years. The right hon. Baronet and his friends were obliged to acknowledge its existence; and so strongly had it operated on the right hon. Baronet's mind, that he allowed it had induced him on one occasion (before the introduction of the late Bill) to abstain from voting in that House on the question of Reform. Such was the state of feeling when he came into office, and when my noble friend at the head of the Administration gave that pledge on the subject of Reform which was consistent with all the principles of his public life. It has been insinuated by a right hon. and gallant officer, that His Majesty's Government increased the extent of their measure of Reform, because they found that they had lost the confidence of the late House of Commons. Now, I will ask, who that knew the composition and character of the late House of Commons would, in his senses, have proposed to them an extended measure of Reform in consequence of our having lost their confidence? Does the right hon. and gallant member recollect the sort of impression which the measure made on its introduction into the late House? An impression so strong, that I am convinced if the House had divided on the first night, the Bill would have been thrown out by an immense majority. It was only after consideration, and after the sense of the country had declared itself in favour of the Bill, that we obtained the small majority that we did obtain. It was not we who excited the feeling in favour of Reform; but, that feeling existing, it would have been very dangerous to have brought in a delusive measure which would have disappointed the people. Undoubtedly, having passed the measure for the Reform of the Representation, by a great majority in this House, and having sent it to the other House of Parliament, we did expect that at least it would have been taken into consideration. In that expectation we have been disappointed.

"The right hon. Baronet says, that this motion is unnecessary. I do not mean to say that my noble friend did not previously tell me of his intention to propose such a

motion; but the step was taken entirely without our suggestion. The object of the motion—whether right or wrong, it is not for me to say—is, that if the House thinks that the removal of the present Ministers from His Majesty's Councils would have a disastrous effect on public affairs, it was desirable that the House should express a strong confidence in those Ministers. It may be necessary that I should speak frankly and freely on the subject. For myself, I declare that unless I felt a reasonable hope that a measure as efficient as that recently passed in this House might be secured by our continuance in office, I would not continue in office an hour. Whenever that hope ceases, I will cease to hold office. Both my colleagues and myself owe too much to our Sovereign—we are too deeply indebted for the kindness, the candour, the frank sincerity which we have uniformly experienced from him—to desert the service of the King while His Majesty thinks our services valuable, and we ourselves think we can advantageously serve His Majesty. But we can no longer serve His Majesty advantageously if we sacrifice our character. Whatever may be the consequences of our retirement, it is our duty not to sacrifice our character. We owe also a great deal to the people. We have been supported by the people in the most handsome manner. The people have a right to demand that we should not desert them while our stay in office can conduce to their benefit. Sir, I will further state, that I will not be a party to the proposal of any measure less efficient than that lately passed in this House. I do not mean to say that, after the discussion and consideration which the measure underwent, some modification may not be made in it, which, without diminishing its efficiency, may render it more complete. But what I mean to say is, that I will be no party to any measure which I do not conscientiously believe will give the people a full, free, and fair representation in Parliament, and secure all the objects which we hoped to effect for them by the late Bill. It is impossible that His Majesty's present Government can make any other proposition to the House. I admit th

1831. Æt. 49.

1831. Æt. 49.

the opponents of the Bill have had a great triumph; although, in the present Debate, with the exception of one hon. gentleman, no great triumph has been expressed. But I am confident that the measure is only postponed. I am satisfied that if the people of England will be firm and determined, but at the same time peaceable and quiet, there can be no doubt of their ultimate, and even speedy, success. There is one, and only one, chance of failure and disappointment; I mean any occurrence that may lead the people to break out into acts of violence, or into any unconstitutional conduct. If I have any influence with the people, if they put any trust in my sincerity—I implore them—for the sake of the great cause in which we are engaged, to be patient and peaceable, and to do nothing illegal or unconstitutional. I would say to them, Be as firm, be as determined, be as persevering as you please; but never break through legal and constitutional restraints; never place yourselves in a situation in which the law must be put in operation against you, whoever are Ministers. By temperance, steadiness, and perseverance, the cause of Parliamentary Reform must ultimately triumph. Whether my colleagues and myself are destined to have the honour of success upon that question as Ministers, or whether, as in the Catholic question, after having fought the battle others are to enjoy the glory of victory, I know not; but as long as I have any voice in the direction of public affairs, I will use my utmost exertions in the cause of Parliamentary Reform." * (Loud cheers.)

This speech is, I think, one of Lord Althorp's best. A majority of 131 in favour of the Resolution assured the Ministers of the fidelity of their supporters, and brightened their hopes of the future.

Whilst this victory gave an immense accession of strength to the Government, it also revealed to

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. viii., p. 458.

them fresh difficulties in their position. The two Houses could not be thus openly at variance on such a vital question as Reform, without imparting a degree of sanction to movements made by the more violent Radical party for the subversion of the House of Lords to which the Whigs were altogether opposed.

At the same time, the enthusiasm in some of the large towns took a democratic character, leading to popular excesses, that both injured the cause and seriously embarrassed the Government.

The Birmingham Political Union.

Already the Political Unions, not satisfied with denouncing the Peerage, had assumed an authority which neither branch of the Legislature pretended to possess; and, in one instance, they nearly implicated the Ministers in their proceedings, for the Birmingham Union at a monster meeting, reported to consist of above 150,000 men, came to a resolution that they would pay no taxes in the event of the Reform Bill being rejected by the Lords;* and then, almost with the same breath, passed a vote of thanks to Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell for their services in carrying the Bill through the Commons.

It may fairly be doubted whether a Minister of the Crown was justified in noticing, except to censure, a meeting which had passed so illegal, if not

* There is no precedent in our history (within my knowledge) of a refusal to pay taxes since the time of the Ship-money, and this rested solely on the alleged illegality of the tax. The Unionists had no such excuse; and in setting the law at defiance they would have plunged the country into the deepest confusion.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

revolutionary, a resolution; but the rejection of the Bill by the Lords having taken place before Lord Althorp could acknowledge the vote of thanks, it appeared to him in the general burst of resentment which followed, that the Government alone stood between the people and revolution; so that for the sake of public security, if not of Reform, it was incumbent on him to maintain at that critical moment, at almost any cost, its popularity with the masses.

Accordingly, he addressed the following letter to Mr. Attwood, the chairman of the meeting:—

"Sir,

"I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter containing a vote of thanks to me from the great meeting over which you presided. The unanimous approbation of 150,000 of my fellow countrymen is no trifling honour. I feel sincerely thankful for it; and I beg to assure you that it gave me the highest gratification. The large majority by which the Bill has been lost in the House of Lords, is, I fear, a very serious calamity. It can, however, only postpone the success of our cause; but I beseech you to use all your influence, not merely to prevent any acts of open violence, but any such resistance to the law as is threatened by the refusal to pay taxes; such a course as this is the least likely to promote our success.

"Yours,

"ALTHORP."

"This letter," observes the "Annual Register," "was caution itself compared with Lord John Russell's, in which the vote of the House of Lords is described as 'the whisper of a faction.'" Lan-

guage which in candour I am obliged to confess did not meet with the approval of Lord Grey.* He found no fault with Lord Althorp's letter,—observing that "it would do no harm." 1831. Æt. 49.

Both letters were subsequently discussed in an animated debate in the House of Commons, from the tenor of which it may be inferred, that but for the irritation produced by Lord John's warmth of expression, Lord Althorp's letter would have escaped with the very gentlest censure. As it was, great forbearance was shown to him by the Opposition, and the silence of Sir Robert Peel on the occasion makes it probable that he considered Lord Althorp to have taken a course which, under the circumstances, it would at the time be hazardous policy to condemn.

In this heated state of the public mind, all parties agreed in the necessity of having a Reform Bill before the country with the least possible delay; and to give Ministers time for preparing it, as well as in the hope of calming the general excitement in the interval, the Session was hastily brought to a close on the 20th of October. The House had never sat so long with such barren results.

Bankruptcy Act and Game Act.

The only Acts passed of any importance were the Bankruptcy Act, well known as Lord Brougham's, and the Game Act, originating with Lord Althorp, a measure which cost the latter infinite trouble, and is still considered the leading statute on the subject.

* See Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 219; and Hansard's Parl. Deb Third ser., v. viii., p. 611.

1831. Æt. 49. It contains many valuable provisions, especially those regulating the sale of dead game, which at the time were violently opposed by many of the leading members of the sporting community, though now universally admitted to have removed one of the greatest temptations to poaching.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### POLITICAL EXCITEMENT—DIFFERENCES IN THE CABINET ON THE PEERAGE QUESTION.



Political excitement.

THE prospect of even a short exemption from his work in Parliament quite raised the spirits of Lord Althorp, and he hurried off to his favourite Wiseton for a week, hoping to recover his strength, which had been seriously reduced by his devotedness to the Reform Bill. I saw him just before he left London, and could not help being shocked by his altered appearance. He looked much thinner, and his complexion had lost the fresh healthy tint which previously distinguished him from most of his colleagues.

He had no companions, nor did he want any; they would have interfered with his enjoyment of his farm, and when he was amongst his flocks and herds he never knew what it was to be dull.

These pleasures, however, were too soon ended. On Monday, 31st October, he returned to London, "having," he says, in a letter to his father, "made a long day of it." He had expected to be seventeen hours on the road, and was only sixteen hours and

1831. Æt. 49.

fifty minutes. At present, the journey (by rail), takes, without an effort, less than four hours.

He found the Cabinet in a gloomy mood. The riots that had taken place at Nottingham and Derby, were as nothing compared with those which he now heard were actually raging at Bristol. The last accounts represented the town as actually "in the possession of the mob."

On the following day (2nd November), his letter is such as might have been written in the beginning of the troubles of Charles I.

"Bristol is at last got under. There was a great escape at the Post Office there. The money in the office on Sunday night was 300,000*l.*; but the man was clever enough to slip away with it in a hack chaise, without being perceived, and it was put into the Post Office at Bath. We are under some apprehension as to a meeting that is to take place on Monday; the language of the Committee of Management is reported to be very bad, and the people are all to be armed with staves like those of the policemen; but I cannot help thinking that our alarms about it are groundless; we must, however, be prepared with as strong a force as we can, and I have no doubt it will end in smoke. Burdett's meeting was a complete failure; and I hope he will fail utterly in organizing his Union, for these associations are really revolutionary.

"Revolutions do not originate as riots like those at Bristol, but they may arise from such Unions as this of which Burdett * has put himself at the head, more especially under a leader who, though with the best intentions, is so weak that he never has any opinions of his own."

* Sir Francis Burdett had been a party to the efforts make by some of the extreme Radicals to form a Political Union in London. He was soon overborne by his more violent associates, and withdrew from them in disgust.—AUTHOR.

The meeting to which Lord Althorp refers in his letter proved of no importance; the most eminent of the Metropolitan Reformers having, at the request of the Government, declined to attend it. The agitation, however, continued to spread, the Political Unions constantly administering to it. Later in the month, the Birmingham Union came to such a pitch of boldness, as to call a meeting to organize the non-payment of taxes, at which their members were required to appear armed. 1831. Æt. 49.

The Duke of Wellington, at the same time, wrote to the King,* that he had it from authority, which he could not doubt, that the Union had made a contract with an eminent gun-maker in London, for a large supply of arms. The King sent the letter to Lord Grey; and although it proved, on a careful inquiry, in which the Duke aided, that the report was false, as far as the gun-maker named was concerned, the violent language of the Unionists made it not improbable that there might be a contract in another quarter. At the earnest desire of the King a Royal Proclamation was issued, warning the people against the impolicy and illegality of the proceedings of the Unions; and the Ministers, to their extreme embarrassment, saw that they might be obliged to put it into effect at Birmingham. Lord Grey was quite prepared at once to do so, thinking, as he did, that there was less danger to the Reform Bill from a quarrel with the Unions, than from a seeming connivance at their proceedings; which, in his

* Letter from Viscount Althorp to Earl Spencer, Oct. 1831, MS.

1831. Æt. 49. opinion, was likely to lead to a reactionary movement among the Middle Classes, and the consequent alienation of the most enlightened and influential portion of the community from the cause of Reform; nor could he repress a natural indignation at the dictatorial tone of the Union Manifestoes, which to a statesman of his temperament were often most offensive. It is, however, very improbable that either Lord Durham, or Sir James Graham, would have supported this policy, and in this predicament Lord Althorp, (who agreed with Lord Grey that the Meeting at Birmingham could not be tolerated, but on the other hand, believed that any forcible interference to prevent it would be fatal to the popularity of the Government, and consequently to the prospects of the Bill), ventured upon what he justly termed a very hazardous step. He sent for a young Birmingham solicitor, named Parkes, of whose character for honesty, and weight with the chiefs of the Union he had been assured, and asked him to represent to Mr. Attwood, as *from himself*, the difficulties of the Government, and the certain ruin to the cause of Reform, unless the Meeting should be put off. Mr. Parkes executed the commission successfully. He found Mr. Attwood anxious to keep the Ministers in office, especially Lord Althorp, whose public services he prized very highly; and it was, I suspect, mainly from the strength of this sentiment at Birmingham that the threatened meeting did not take place.*

* This transaction was the commencement of Mr. Parkes's good

1831. Æt. 49.

During these audacious acts of the Unions, the Cabinet seems to have been in the most uncomfortable state. No disposition could be found in the Tory Peers to give way, and yet the public agitation was rapidly increasing.

Differences in the Cabinet on the Peerage question.

The Ministers sat hour after hour in fruitless deliberation on the means of bringing this unnatural contest to a satisfactory issue. The Lord Chancellor and Lord Durham proposed to cut the Gordian knot by asking the King to create sixty Peers—that being the lowest number likely to secure a majority. At first, the proposal met with the unanimous dissent of their colleagues. It was felt that such a step would utterly destroy the authority of the House of Lords as a branch of the Legislature, and virtually amounted to a Revolution. Neither Lord Grey nor Lord Althorp entered fully into the fears entertained by their friends; they moreover agreed on the necessity of maintaining the constitutional rights of the Peerage intact to the last extremity; not that Lord Althorp was so attached to the order as his chief. He regretted that he should eventually have to enter the House of Peers,

fortune. He became professionally concerned for the Whigs in election matters, and was much trusted by them. I knew him well, and invariably found him zealous, honest, and able in his vocation. Eventually he was rewarded by the appointment of Taxing Master to the Court of Chancery, which he held for many years up to his decease in 1865. He was no mean scholar, and could write with clearness and spirit. He has left behind him some Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, whose merits as an author and a statesman he estimated much higher than most people did. He told me the work might extend to three volumes; and if this was the case, it is very improbable that they would have found many readers.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

and he held few opinions in common with the great majority of its members; but he dreaded the establishment of a single Legislature; believing as he did, that the action and reaction of each House on the other constituted one of the greatest safeguards of the community.

Letter from Lord Althorp to Lord Grey.

The following letter presents a faithful picture of the workings of a truly conscientious mind in this unprecedented emergency. The indecision it exhibits sprang entirely from a sense of duty, and all who knew the writer could testify that, although he was sometimes slow in forming his opinion, his firmness in adhering to it, even under the most appalling trials, amounted to obstinacy, as was seen on more than one occasion of his official life.

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL GREY.

"Downing Street, *November 23rd*, 1831.

"My dear Lord Grey,

"I wish to prepare you for a conversation which you will have to-morrow. After the Cabinet, Graham came to me, and said he felt himself very much embarrassed by being convinced that if the Bill was rejected a second time by the House of Lords, the most disastrous consequences would follow; he therefore thinks we are not justified in running any hazard of such an event. He has no hopes that the Peers who formed the majority will be converted in such numbers as to give anything like a certainty of success. His idea therefore is that we should immediately secure to ourselves the consent of the King to make the requisite number of Peers, whatever that number may be, pledging ourselves that we will not act upon such consent without an established necessity, or beyond the extent of that necessity. If the King refuses his consent, that we

ought immediately to resign. I told him that I felt a very decided objection to making any great number, and that I was convinced the Cabinet would not agree to make this application to the King. His answer was that if this was the case he had made up his mind to resign. I advised him to speak to you about this to-morrow. I confess I have had my misgivings upon this subject, and that was the reason I mentioned it to you this morning. I feel what I believe to be an insurmountable objection to overwhelming the House of Lords by a large creation of Peers; but still I must admit that if it was clearly proved to me that a revolution would be the consequence of not taking this step, and that not only the House of Lords, but every other thing of value in the country would be overturned, it would be a very strong thing to say that it ought not to be taken. I should prefer making use of the Privileges of the Commons for the purpose of forcing the House of Lords, to using this Prerogative of the Crown. 1831. Æt. 49.

"As I told you this morning, both, however, are desperate expedients. You have, of course, made up your mind as to the line of conduct we ought to follow; but I thought it best that you should know beforehand what Graham intends to say to you, and what he at present intends to do, and I told him accordingly that I should write to you upon this subject. If he perseveres in bringing the matter forward, and with the intention of resigning in case of failure, our days are numbered. For any one Minister going out on this ground, in the present state of feeling of the country, must be fatal to us; and the only way this could be avoided would be, that the Cabinet should be unanimous in giving this advice to the King, and that the King should accept it. The reasons for making up our minds to take some decisive steps to secure our success are undoubtedly very strong. We are supposed by the Reformers to have the full support of the King to the utmost extent of his prerogative; and the example set by Casimir Perrier in France, though in reality by no means analogous, tends to make them expect this from us. I should not,

1831. Æt. 49.

think, be able to make up my mind to follow it; but I do not feel so much objection to requiring of the King that he should put this power in our hands,—the possession of it would render the use of it unnecessary. If the King refused to give it to us, and we resigned now, our measure is carried; for no other Ministry could be formed, and we should come back with such an overwhelming strength that the House of Lords must give way at once. These are my views at present; you perceive they are not very steady or fixed, and I shall be very glad to be guided by you.

"Yours most truly,

"ALTHORP."

It has been stated* that Lord Grey saw all the dangers and difficulties of his position and trembled under them, so that he could hardly be kept at his post by the more resolute and calm words of the Lord Chancellor. For this I can find no evidence, and it is incompatible with the known courage of Lord Grey. He may indeed have expressed a belief that the Tory Peers might, under pressure from the country, accept a Reform Bill at the hands of their own party, which, from hatred of the Whigs, they would reject from the Ministry; in which case he would gladly resign, his determination to pass the Bill, either in office or out of office, being fixed, unalterable, and paramount to all personal considerations. A pusillanimous flight would have belied the whole tenor of his past life.

At times there was reason to hope that, with some moderate concessions to the fears and prejudices of the Peers, the Bill would be allowed to

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 225.

pass. Amongst other persons, Dr. Blomfield, the Bishop of London, and Mr. Horsley Palmer, the Governor of the Bank—the one possessing great influence with the Bishops, and the other with the trading community in London—gave confident assurance to Lord Althorp to this effect. Under this impression, Lord Grey and Lord Althorp again took counsel together and amended the Bill in a conservative spirit, by modifying the clauses for the disfranchisement of the freemen, and taking the amount of taxes, instead of the population, in every borough, as the chief element in the basis of its enfranchisement. The latter involved a re-examination of the Schedules and additional inquiries into the population and property in the boroughs, all which it was proposed to subject to the control of Parliament, instead as before of leaving it to the Privy Council. These provisions might give umbrage to the Radicals, but Lord Grey looked to the country at large for support in what he considered a reasonable compromise. 1831. Æt. 49.

In the meanwhile a feeling sprung up throughout the Liberal party for the early meeting of Parliament to consider the third edition of the Reform Bill. The question was brought before the Cabinet, and the time fixed for the 6th of December. Lord Althorp, in this instance, is said to have divided the Cabinet against Lord Grey, who, far from yielding, as has been stated, to the pressure from without, desired a further prolongation of the Recess, to prove to the country the determination of the

1831. Æt. 49.

Government to put down all illegal proceedings on the part of the Unions. He wrote to Lord Althorp that he felt the Government to have been so remiss on this point as to expose themselves to serious animadversion in Parliament. Lord Althorp, on the other hand, treated this exposure as a trifle compared with the immediate and vigorous prosecution of the great object before them.

The following letter from Lord Althorp, on the first day of the Session, to his father, throws some light on these transactions :—

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL SPENCER.

"*December 20th*, 1831.

Letter from Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer.

"My dear Father,

"Lord Grey is quite decided against making the number of Peers necessary to carry the Bill. It is a difficult question, but on the whole I agree with him. I read him your letter to-day, as it is right that he should know the opinion a man like you has upon the subject. Whether he changes his opinion or not, the proposing this to the King would undoubtedly break up the Government. I think also as certainly that the refusing to propose it will have the same effect. If the number requisite could be reduced to a moderate amount, such as twelve, or perhaps twenty, I should concur, and so I think would Lord Grey; but to make forty, fifty, or sixty, would be to effect a certain revolution with the view of preventing a contingent one. I think, as matters stood at the time of the division in the House of Lords, less than sixty would not have done; because we must calculate that such a measure would disgust a good many of our present supporters, whom we should lose. We had a dreadful scene at my Cabinet dinner yesterday, which will probably lead to very detrimental consequences for the moment. Durham made the most

brutal attack on Lord Grey I ever heard in my life, and I conclude will certainly resign.* He will put this upon alterations in the Bill—most unfairly—because there is no alteration of any consequence in the main principle; and I doubt whether he knows anything about the alterations, as he will not allow anybody to tell him what they are. But if he resigns on this ground it will break up the Government. 1831. Æt. 49.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ALTHORP."

* See the Greville Memoirs, Sec. edit., v. ii., p. 226.—LORD LYTTELTON.

# CHAPTER XIX.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.—NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE MINISTERS AND LORD HARROWBY.—THIRD REFORM BILL.—RUSSIAN DUTCH LOAN.—COMMITTEE ON REFORM BILL.—THIRD READING OF THE BILL.

1831. Æt. 49.

Meeting of Parliament.

THE Session opened auspiciously for the Ministers —the King's Speech, though long and comprehensive, being generally approved.* The passages in it condemnatory of the Unions are said to have been suggested by the King; but they were quite as much prompted by the feelings of Lord Grey, and served to break the force of the attack which Sir Robert Peel (as Lord Grey had foretold) was prepared to make on the Government. His object was to alarm the country, and the Bristol riots and the Birmingham proclamation supplied him with two appropriate topics for declamation. He was loudly cheered when he observed, "that long before the

* I happened to be near the King when he put on his crown in the robing-room of the House of Lords. He seemed in excellent spirits. Lord Grey observed to him that the Speech was one of the longest ever delivered from the throne. The King replied that he did not mind a long speech—that when he was a boy his tutor used to say that no lesson could be too long for him to learn by heart. He likewise remarked to the Lord Chancellor, that he usually learnt his speeches by heart, and was not afraid of being put out by any accidental interruption.—AUTHOR.

bloody days of Marat and Danton, there were some pages in the history of the French Revolution that were too faithful types of the history of our own times." He did not go so far as many of his party desired in support of Sir Charles Wetherell, whom he was too sensible to regard as a martyr. Indeed, when a judge, as in this instance, sinks into a violent political partisan, he virtually divests himself of the ermine, and loses his title to its privileges. The debate altogether was unimportant. Lord Althorp seems to have considered it as a mere overture to the drama. In his own speech he carefully avoided all irritating topics, and was content with carrying the Address quietly without an amendment. 1831. Æt. 49.

Negotiations between the Ministers and Tory peers.

The notice of bringing in the Reform Bill was given for the 12th of December. In the interval, some encouraging signs of vacillation appeared among the Tory Peers. Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe intimated their wish to confer with Lord Grey on the possibility of a compromise,* and a meeting took place in Downing Street on the 11th between them and some of the leading members of the Government, which, although it

* This negotiation originated, I believe, very much with Mr. Charles Greville (the Clerk of the Council), a moderate politician, always favourable to progress, and singularly free from prejudice. His views were generally sound, and he could express them with clearness, ingenuity, and force. He was one of the most agreeable men of his day, and his love for society and pleasure alone prevented his rising to eminence. His MS. Diary I am told contains a full account of these negotiations, which he was eminently fitted to conduct from his friendship with the great party-leaders on both sides.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

came to nothing at the time, was important, as proving the existence of a party in the Lords alive to the danger of rejecting the Bill.*

The third Reform Bill brought in by Lord J. Russell.

The next day (the 12th) a very full House was in attendance to hear the Ministerial Statement of the new Bill. At five o'clock the Speaker looked at the Cabinet Bench for Lord John Russell to begin the debate; but he was absent, and half an hour passed away before he made his appearance, looking very pale, and, as I was informed, feeling very ill. All business had necessarily been suspended in the interval, and the members having become rather impatient, gave him a cold reception. This, however, in no way disconcerted him, and he began his speech at once, with his usual coolness and self-possession, as if nothing had happened.

He was of course listened to with far less interest than when he had brought forward either the first or the second Reform Bill. There could be little novelty in his speech beyond the alterations he had to propose in the Bill, and these were of a character to call forth approval rather than enthusiasm. He stated them with clearness, and in a conciliatory tone that showed the disposition of the Ministers to meet all objections raised to their measure, when these did not involve its principles. He spoke for

* The Tory papers falsely represented the meeting to have taken place at the request of Earl Grey, who was much blamed in consequence by ardent Reformers. He was most strongly urged by at least one of his colleagues to make the whole truth public; but his high sense of honour caused him at once to reject the proposal.—Author.

an hour and ten minutes, and sat down amidst general, but not loud cheers. 1831. Æt. 49.

It was believed at the time, that if the Tories had at once accepted, with a good grace, the concessions thus proposed by the Government, they would have obtained still better terms in the further stages of the Bill. The Radicals were in dreadful alarm lest this should happen;* but such a course would have been little in accordance with the usual policy of the great Tory leader. Sir Robert Peel had been charged with showing no generosity to his opponents: it is more certain that he expected none from them; and his distrust or reserve thus deprived him of the support which the genial warmth of Mr. Canning often drew from the ranks of the Whigs. On this occasion he showed himself the hard and wary politician.† His only feeling was that of fear lest some of his own party might, on the impulse of the moment, commit themselves in favour of the Government; and he rose immediately after Lord John to declare, in a very bitter party speech, his unabated hostility to the new Bill. Far from giving the Ministers any credit for the improvements which he admitted to have been made in it,

* See Roebuck's History, v. ii., pp. 245–6. There cannot be a better authority on this point.—AUTHOR.

† It was a saying of Lord Bolingbroke, that the heart was as necessary to a great statesman as the head. He certainly did not act on this principle; nor did Sir Robert Peel, when he showed such disregard to the feelings of his supporters in the manner of bringing forward the Catholic Emancipation Bill. With respect to Reform, he probably thought that such a declaration as noticed in the text would break up his party, the Lords not being ripe for it.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

he insisted that these were due entirely to the efforts of the Opposition, and presented the strongest encouragement to their insisting on further and larger concessions. He charged the Ministers, as before, with having raised the question of Reform, not from any conviction of its necessity, but to excite the country in their favour, as was proved (he said) by an admission of Lord Althorp at the end of the Session, that when the Bill was first brought forward he (Lord Althorp) did not expect that it would pass the House of Commons. These taunts and insinuations received hearty cheers from the extreme section of the Tories and the ex-Ministerial Benches; but were met by cold looks and silence from the independent members, who readily accepted the strong and absolute disavowal at once given by Lord Althorp to the sentiments thus ascribed to him. He said that it was only at the end of the first night's debate, and not antecedently to it, that he had feared the Bill would not pass the House of Commons; and in referring to the other charges against the Government, he repeated that the Bill had been the result, and not the cause of agitation; he then proceeded to comment on the main points of Sir Robert's speech with a spirit and power which for the moment seemed to raise him above his opponent, if the warmth of the cheering given to each could be taken as any test of their relative merit. He was unusually moved by this mark of sympathy. What must have pleased him still more was the favourable turn of the debate

after his speech. Lord Clive, a Tory member of high consideration, from his good sense, probity, and Parliamentary influence,* went so far as to praise the Ministers warmly, both for the alterations made in the Bill and the conciliatory tone in which these had been announced. Other Tory members spoke to the same effect; and Sir Robert Peel, in alarm at their probable defection, again rose and declared that whatever other members might do, he should oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. After this caution, which he delivered with his usual solemnity, there were no more liberal speeches from the Tory benches; but enough transpired in conversation among the members in the lobby to prove the desire of a large section of his followers to pursue a moderate course. Mr. (afterwards Lord Chancellor) Campbell told me that he had been talking to many of the Tories, who declared the Bill to be theirs, and not ours, so they could see no harm in their supporting it. This made Mr. George Dawson observe, in reply to a question from Mr. Spring Rice, how he liked the new Bill, "Egad, I think it a d—d deal the worst of all of them."

1831. Æt. 49.

The Bill was read a first time with general accla-

* Lord Clive and his brother Robert were strong Tories—Church and State men—holding in contempt the new-fangled Liberalism of some of their party. When Lewis Knight (subsequently Lord Justice Knight Bruce) had been declaiming for an hour in Committee on the independence of Bishop's Castle (for which the Earl of Powis, father of Lord Clive, had returned him), Lord Clive, so far from being pleased by this absurd tirade, quietly observed that the choice which the burgesses had made of Knight was not theirs but his; and it was not the independence of the electors, but the absence of it, which ought to have been defended.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

mation. As Lord Althorp left the House he turned to me with a smile, saying, "You may make a favourable report to-night."*

These encouraging appearances were so far realized, that the motion for the Second Reading occupied only two nights, and met with no factious or unreasonable opposition. The debate, too, was one of which a Whig leader might be justly proud. The party throughout it maintained an ascendency beyond dispute. On the first night was the brilliant speech of Mr. Macaulay, up to that time certainly his greatest, in which his noble vindication of the policy of the Whigs during their exclusion from office, and his crushing attack on Sir Robert Peel, were received with the most tremendous cheers.†

* I attended the House during the progress of the Bill, and transmitted reports of the debate, and of the temper of the House, for the information of the Cabinet.—AUTHOR.

These reports are praised by Mr. C. Greville in his Memoirs, v. iii., p. 22, in the following words: "He (Mr. Le Marchant) has particularly distinguished himself by his reports of the debates in the House of Commons. He goes there every night, and forwards to the Chancellor from time to time an account of the debate, and the manner of it—very well executed indeed." The Greville Memoirs appeared a very few days before the death of the author of this work—had they been published earlier I have no doubt he would have quoted largely from them.—EDITOR.

† Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. ix., p. 378. Mr. Sheil praised this speech warmly to me at the time. He observed, "Macaulay is to my mind the most extraordinary person in either House, except one to whom he is not sufficiently like to be compared: I mean the Chancellor. Unfortunately, with all his talent, and spirit, and force, there is nothing of the debater in his speeches, nothing betokening readiness; but he has the power of coming forward on great occasions with a speech that commands the House, and this would make him an invaluable accession to any Ministry. I hope we shall soon see him in office."—AUTHOR.

"Captain Spencer returned from London; said Mr. Stanley's

1831. Æt. 49.

The attempt at a reply by Mr. Croker, in a speech of two hours and a half, utterly failed, and only added disgrace to defeat, for on the following night Mr. Stanley convicted him of gross misrepresentation of facts, in the version he gave of the differences between Charles the First and the Parliament, the House all the time evidently enjoying his exposure.* The cheers, indeed, obtained by Mr. Stanley almost surpassed those given to Mr. Macaulay, and it is extraordinary that a speech so eminently successful should have been overlooked in the history of the Bill. †

Sir Robert Peel's opposition.

Even Sir Robert Peel could not turn the tide that set so strongly against the Tories. His very able and eloquent speech was, indeed, rather a defence of himself than of his party. They were so disheartened as to be unwilling to hazard a division; and although they yielded to his authority and in-

speech was the best that had been delivered for a long time, and had quite extinguished Croker." (Diary of Wm. Hy. Lord Lyttelton. Althorp, Dec. 18th, 1831).—LORD LYTTELTON.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. ix., p. 514.

† Many of the older members I recollect saying that, if not the best, it was one of the most effective speeches they had ever heard. Mr. Stanley had previously not been thought equal to a speech of this high order. Mr. Croker, whose assurance was proverbial, at first listened to him with apparent indifference; but as he proceeded in his attack, supported by immense cheering from a very large majority of the House, Mr. Croker's courage gave way—he became very pale, and pulled his hat over his brows. Lord Althorp thought that he was going to faint, and he did not recover himself the whole night. I am bound in candour to confess that Lord Althorp, who followed Mr. Croker in the debate on the preceding night, missed the credit of this victory from his imperfect historical recollections, as did many of the other Whigs; and it was Sir John Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton) to whom Mr. Stanley owed the information which he turned to such good account.—AUTHOR.

1831. Æt. 49.

fluence, some of them, I think, must have declined to follow him into the lobby, for when the numbers were announced, they appeared thus—

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes . . . . . | 324 |
| Noes . . . . . | 162 |
| Majority for the Second Reading | 162 |

Second Reading of the Bill carried in the Commons.

This majority, being an increase of thirty above the highest that had yet been obtained in favour of Reform, became the subject of much angry recrimination among the Opposition. Mr. Sturges Bourne, an old Pittite of great Parliamentary experience, observed to one of the Tory leaders: "I suppose you divided merely to satisfy the country that the Lords had no alternative except to pass the Bill;"* and this indeed it was generally expected would be the result of the division. Lord Althorp received as warm congratulations as if the Bill were absolutely passed. The Lord Chancellor told me the next morning, that for the first time he now believed the Peers would let the Bill go into Committee, and he left London for the North under that impression.

These prospects were soon clouded. It had been overlooked in the first blush of the victory, that although some of the Tories had not voted against the Bill, none had voted for it. In fact there were no converts to the measure. The opposition in the Lords continued as hostile as before. The

* This was mentioned to me by Mr. Sturges Bourne.—AUTHOR.

question therefore of a large creation of Peers again forced itself on the Ministry, and this time it very nearly broke up the Government. Lord Althorp was one of the few members of the Cabinet who considered the step as one of immediate necessity. How far he influenced Earl Grey in coming to the same decision, I am not able to say; that he warmly supported his chief in this, as on almost every other critical occasion, is certain, and that without this support the Bill must have been lost, can hardly be questioned. There never had been such differences before in the Cabinet. Even Lord Lansdowne—one of Earl Grey's oldest personal and political friends—was now against him, and came up from Bowood expressly to oppose his views. Unfortunately, the Lord Chancellor, on whom Lord Grey relied for assistance, lay seriously ill at Brougham.* It was only after much controversy, and with some concessions, that Lord Grey succeeded in obtaining the authority of the Cabinet to submit to the King the difficulties of the Government, and to propose the creation of at least ten Peers. 1831. Æt. 49.

His interview with the King was very satisfactory, and in announcing the result to Lord Althorp, there

* The Lord Chancellor's illness was not believed to be real in the Tory circles, and he was charged with intriguing against Lord Grey. This was a positive calumny. His family were, I can state from my own knowledge, seriously alarmed about him; and so far from intriguing against Lord Grey, he often told me in confidence that nothing should induce him to separate from that nobleman—indeed there were times he acknowledged to me, during these discussions, that he felt Lord Grey's objections to the creation of Peers to be well founded.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

are passages in his letters which show how great must have been his struggles, both with his own feelings and with his colleagues, during the whole of these discussions.

EARL GREY TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"*January 10th*, 1832.

"I will confess to *you* that I have not so forgotten my objection to a large creation of Peers, as not to feel some anxiousness in approaching that measure, and I wish to God it could be avoided. Have you considered what might be the effect of some resignations—Palmerston, Melbourne, Richmond—and if those took that step, probably Lansdowne, if not Stanley, also? It seems to me that with such a defection it would be impossible for us to form a new Administration, to say nothing of the extreme and almost insuperable embarrassment which would be the result of a change in the Foreign Office at this time. It is in vain to look back; but I sometimes think we should have done better to resign on our defeat in the House of Lords, and that things would have been more likely to be brought to a right conclusion by that measure.

"Ever yours,

"GREY."

The House met again on the 19th of January, when the Irish and Scotch Reform Bills were brought in, and after some angry and unreasonable criticisms, even by the Ministerial members, especially the Scotch, who were regarded as amongst the most troublesome of opponents, they were read the first time.

On the following day (the 20th) the motion was

made for going into Committee on the (English) Bill, and then Lord Althorp's troubles recommenced. He had thought, during the Committee on the former Bill, that no inducement should make him go through the same work again, but he had now become so identified with the measure, and was so intent upon its passing, that the idea of shrinking from his official post probably did not even occur to him, and he certainly set an example of cheerfulness and energy which had a most favourable effect on his wearied supporters. 1832. Æt. 50.

There was no sign, at first, of a less hostile policy in the Opposition leaders, for although Mr. Croker rather ostentatiously declared that he had given both public and private assurances to the Ministers of his having taken great pains to prevent the necessity of delay, he now, in conjunction with Sir Charles Wetherell and Sir Robert Peel, opposed the Speaker's leaving the chair, on the ground of further information respecting the alteration made in the Schedules being indispensable. It was in vain that Lord Althorp showed that the alterations did not relate to the clauses about to be proposed. The triumvirate continued to press their objection for some hours, and at last divided, when they had the mortification of finding themselves deserted by some of their most respectable supporters; as, with the exception of those personally interested in the boroughs to be disfranchised, scarcely an independent member voted with them, and they were left in a minority of 53.

1832. Æt. 50.

The House being now in Committee, Lord Althorp proceeded with unexpected rapidity, and aided as he was by the postponement of some items in the Schedules, he succeeded in carrying the first twelve clauses in three nights.

Then it was that, when no longer within the magic circle of Reform, the night (of the 26th of January) not being a Government night, the Ministers narrowly escaped a defeat, which must have been followed by their immediate retirement from office. The account given by Lord Althorp of these proceedings in a letter to the King, is so candid and so like himself, as to be entitled to insertion here—only premising that the first part of the letter relates to the extraordinary conduct of Mr. Spencer Perceval (the eldest son of the Minister), a gentleman highly esteemed in private life, and of abilities that might have raised him to distinction, but for his religious fanaticism.

"DOWNING STREET, *Jan. 27th*, 1832.

"Viscount Althorp presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has the honour to inform your Majesty, that the Debates in the House of Commons began last night by a Motion of Mr. Perceval's for an Address to your Majesty to appoint a General Fast. Mr. Perceval excluded strangers on this occasion, there is not, therefore any account of the Debate, or rather of his speech, in the newspapers. Viscount A. had endeavoured to prevent him from making the Motion, by informing him previously that it was the intention of your Majesty's servants to advise your Majesty to issue a proclamation for this purpose. Mr. Perceval was not, however, satisfied by this, and persevered

in making the Motion, stating that he thought the suggestion ought to originate in the House of Commons. Mr. Perceval spoke under the highest state of excitement, with a Bible in his hand, from which he made quotations for an hour and three-quarters, but was at last persuaded to allow the motion to be negatived without a Division. Mr. Goulburn, Sir Thomas Baring, and Mr. Briscoe expressed their wish that a Fast should take place, but joined with Viscount Althorp in deprecating the discussion of the subject. 1832. Æt. 50.

"After this was disposed of, Mr. Herries made his promised motion of censure upon your Majesty's Ministers on account of the payment of the Russian Dutch Loan, contrary, as he asserts, to the provision of the treaty of 1814,* and without the authority of Law.

"Your Majesty's Ministers were placed in a very small majority, and Viscount Althorp is afraid that he must admit to your Majesty, that if the question had been decided upon its own merits, without reference to other considerations, it would have been decided against them. This was his impression during the greater part of the Debate, until at last it became evident to the House that such a vote must have the effect of changing the Administration, and Viscount Althorp believes that it was on this ground alone that the small majority was obtained. Lord Palmerston concluded the Debate with a first-rate speech, which had a very powerful effect, and converted several votes. There did not appear to be many gentlemen who did not think this country was in equity bound to make and continue the payments, but they thought that as the Law at present stood, your

* This treaty, to which England, Holland, France, and Russia were parties, was made for the maintenance of the new Kingdom of the Netherlands, and it contained a guarantee by Holland and England of a loan of five millions to Russia, with a proviso, that in the event of the separation of Holland and Belgium, the guarantee should cease. The Treaty had, in the usual manner, been affirmed by Parliament. Lord Althorp regarded the separation contemplated by the Treaty as a forced one, such as France was believed to threaten, and not as a voluntary one, such as happened in 1831.—AUTHOR

1832. Æt. 50.

Majesty's Ministers were not authorised to issue the money from the Exchequer. The Motion consisted of three resolutions; the two first, resolutions of fact, and the third, the resolution of censure. Viscount Althorp moved the previous question with the two first, and negatived the third. The Division on the previous question was 239 for your Majesty's Ministers, and 219 against them. That on the third resolution was, 238 for them, and 214 against them."

The Russian Dutch Loan.

Without going into the details of an obsolete controversy, I cannot refrain from observing that Lord Althorp hardly does justice to himself or his cause in the foregoing letter. The great question in the debate was not so much the technical legality of the payment of the dividends, as the continuance of the guarantee given by England to Russia under the Treaty. This was most strenuously and ingeniously disputed by the Tory leaders, and was at one time doubted by Lord Althorp himself, but his doubts had been removed by the arguments and authority of Sir Herbert Jenner and Dr. Lushington, the most eminent international lawyers of that day, and by the evidence brought before him of the intentions of the parties to the Treaty, especially Russia; for the Emperor, upon this understanding alone, had joined in the second coalition against Napoleon, and thus prevented the French bringing an overwhelming force against the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo. So little distrust had been entertained at the time of the security of the Loan, that Mr. Alexander Baring, when consulted by Lord Althorp through a common friend, expressed sur-

prise at the question being asked. "What," he replied, "not pay the dividends on the Russian-Dutch loan! Do you mean to pay the three per cents.?" Indeed, to repudiate the guarantee would have seriously shaken the credit of the country abroad. The Tories probably had no such object, or, if they could have turned out the Ministry, they would have passed an Act to legalize the guarantee. 1832. Æt. 50.

Lord Althorp, though warned by Mr. Ellice, could not believe the Tories to be in earnest, and it was only on entering the House on the night of Mr. Herries' motion, when he saw their benches full, and his own comparatively empty, that he discovered his mistake. He made, however, a clear and sensible speech, which might have satisfied an impartial audience, as did the candid manner in which he stated the grounds on which he had acted, and took on himself the whole responsibility of the proceeding. Unluckily for him, the debate did not end here, and the Tories, strong especially in lawyers, impressed the House with the idea that there had been an absolute waste of the public money, as well as a breach of the law, in recognising the loan. They certainly had the best of the argument. Mr. Pepys (afterwards Lord Chancellor Cottenham) said to me, "This is an awkward business. The Ministers make their men feel the collar too much." Lord Duncannon, in the same spirit, added, "If we divide now, we shall be in a minority, or something like it; our friends think us in the wrong, and are shirking

1832. Æt. 50.

off, whilst Althorp has given Ellice peremptory orders not to canvass anybody."

It was past midnight before Dr. Lushington could rise. Sir James Graham tried to stop him, saying, "It is all over with us; don't throw yourself into the breach; it can be of no use." But fortunately he proceeded and spoke with great effect. Lord Palmerston, at two o'clock, was admirable. Still appearances were so gloomy that an independent Liberal member proposed an adjournment. Peel opposed it, and so, to the general surprise, did Lord Althorp.

The House afterwards divided, and the Ministers had a majority of only 24, the small number stated in Lord Althorp's letter to the King.

Sir Henry Hardinge insisted to me that this was entirely owing to the admirable whipping-in of Lord Duncannon and Mr. Ellice, who took on themselves to disobey Lord Althorp's injunctions.

Lord Grey was deeply mortified at this narrow escape.* He said to Lord Althorp the next morning that the division was a proof that the members cared only for Reform, and not for the Administration. The Tories were so highly elated that they determined to raise the question of law in the case in the Lords, which they did through Lord Wyn-

* The case of the Government was very imperfectly stated and feebly supported, so much so that independent members were much puzzled as to what line to take. I was completely satisfied by the speeches of Dr. Lushington and Lord Palmerston, that the Government would have acted most unfairly if they had taken any other course.—Lord Belper.

ford, when the Lord Chancellor, in an admirable speech, vindicated the course taken by the Government with such success as to satisfy even the Duke of Wellington. Lord Wynford, deserted by his party, in a rage withdrew his motion. This debate is more remarkable, as the Lord Chancellor was at the time labouring under severe indisposition. He took scarcely any nourishment that day, and I was afraid that he might fail from mere weakness. There was considerable difference of opinion among the Tories as to the expediency of Lord Wynford's motion. Mr. (better known as Billy) Holmes told me that he was strongly against it, and asked whether anything could have been more egregiously silly than, after the success they had obtained in the Commons, to court a battle in the very place where they certainly had not the superiority in debate. Lord Lyndhurst said much the same to Mr. Bonham Carter.

1832. Æt. 50.

The sittings of the Committee were resumed on the following day (the 29th), and continued with slight interruptions until the 16th March, Lord Althorp not being absent a single night. During that time the same duties and responsibilities again devolved upon him in passing the clauses through the ordeal of the Committee, and it is stated by Mr. Roebuck that every word of the Bill was canvassed as pertinaciously and with as much asperity as before. This must not be taken literally, for the Schedules, which could hardly be carried in twenty days in the former Committee, were now

The Reform Bill in Committee.

1832. Æt. 50.

despatched in seven; but many of the other clauses certainly took more time, and were more violently opposed, owing to the activity of the Tory lawyers, which was observed to increase, as the zeal of the independent members diminished. Lord Althorp thus found himself, night after night, arguing questions on technical points in the machinery of the Bill against Sir James Scarlett, Sir Charles Wetherell, Sir Edward Sugden, and Mr. Pollock,—the flower of the Bar;* and it is no more than justice to him to say that he fully maintained the reputation he had acquired in going over the same ground in the former Committee. He had indeed spared no pains to qualify himself for the task. Besides his experience in originally framing and wording the clauses, he was constantly engaged during the progress of the Committee in making them as perfect as possible, with the aid of some of the ablest Whig lawyers, Wednesdays and Saturdays being generally devoted to this purpose. Some of his fellow labourers told me that he showed during those consultations an extraordinary aptitude for handling points of law, or, as Mr. Bonham Carter expressed it, "a thoroughly legal head." Among many instances in which he well justified this commendation, I may cite the debate on the 36th clause, for the establishment of a system of Registration, in which his speech seems to me by far the best on the subject; and it so completely carried the House,

* Lord Althorp, of course, had the invaluable assistance of Lord John Russell, but the conduct of the debate fell upon him.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

that the Tory lawyers tried to escape a division, but they were not permitted to do so, and they could only muster 65 votes against 188. Among the questions of more general interest discussed in the Committee was that of the Borough or 10*l.* franchise (27th clause), termed by Lord John Russell one of the pillars of the Bill. It was contested with less warmth than in the former Committee, but owing to Mr. Hunt's amendment in favour of a household franchise it occupied two nights. Notwithstanding its general popularity, it had never been liked by the more ardent Reformers. They had expected a franchise of a more varied and comprehensive character, descending below the middle classes, so as to connect the poorer householders with the representative system, and were greatly disappointed at the total exclusion of that element from the Bill. Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Baring commented on this defect with such ability and vigour, that many Liberals could not help thinking that had those statesmen been in office they would have devised a better franchise. It ought, however, to be remembered, that the only original suggestion which Sir Robert Peel ventured to make, was to fix the number of voters in the new boroughs, and then to take that number of the inhabitants paying the highest rates for a constituency. Mr. Baring adopted the same principle for the creation of a county constituency. With respect to the existing boroughs, Sir Robert Peel would have left the scot-and-lot voters and the freemen untouched.

1832. Æt. 50.

In common with the rest of his party, he considered 10*l.* too low a franchise, and preferred Rate to Rent as a criterion of value.

Household franchise could find no advocate, except Mr. Hunt, and was almost unanimously rejected, 11 members voting for it and 290 against it.

It has been often remarked * that among the many difficulties with which the Ministers had to contend in the Committee, not the least were the questions raised by their own supporters, under the shelter of the Opposition; the latter, I may add, being not at all scrupulous so long as they could give trouble or create embarrassment. Thus the mischievous proposal of adding to the number of disfranchised places by placing the Tory Borough of Petersfield in Schedule A,† was made by Mr. Sheil with full consciousness of the increased irritation that would result in the Lords from such a motion being carried; nor were the Tories ashamed to vie with the Radicals in vehemently cheering his speech, opposed as it was to their principles and convictions. The perplexity and hesitation among the Ministerialists when Mr. Sheil sat down were alarmingly evident. Lord Althorp rose at once, and in a few words, which at the time were much praised, and have been cited with commendation

Mr. Sheil's motion.

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 255.

† On the 21st February, being the 15th night of the Committee. Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. x., p. 626.

Mr. Sheil's object was to add to the number of Irish members, without adding to the members of the House. Accordingly, if his motion had succeeded, he would have proposed to give the franchise to an Irish borough.—AUTHOR.

even by Mr. Roebuck,* averted the threatening storm. 1832. Æt. 50.

"As a Reformer" (he said), "I am unable to answer your arguments — they are unanswerable as matters of reasoning. My only reply is, that your proposal is impolitic. I state now as I have stated before, that it will be more prudent not to create unnecessary opposition to the great measure of Reform by carrying the principle of disfranchisement further than the Lords have carried it. I shall therefore oppose your motion."

This virtually settled the question. Sir Robert Peel, in a clever insidious harangue, addressed mainly to the Liberals, tried in turns to cajole and taunt them into a support of Mr. Sheil, in vain; he only brought on himself a well-deserved rebuke from Mr. Stanley, who charged him "with again putting himself between the two sides of the House to prevent the working of the spirit of reconciliation." Mr. Sheil saw that if he persisted he would not be supported, and, to the great mortification of the Tories, withdrew his motion.

Lord Althorp's success on this occasion is more remarkable, from the fact that the Irish members, who formed no inconsiderable section of the Liberals in the House, were at the time very unfavourably disposed towards the Government. At the beginning of the Session they had taken mortal offence at a speech delivered by Earl Grey in the Lords, strongly condemning the agitation against the

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 256.

1832. Æt. 50.

payment of tithe in Ireland, and undertaking to enforce the law for its recovery, if necessary, by further legislation. They said that they should be absolutely disowned by their constituents if they continued to support a Government holding these sentiments; and it was feared, from their violent language, that in their resentment they would throw themselves precipitately into Opposition. The Reform Bill was considered in danger. The interposition of Lord Althorp, and especially his speech in the Commons, in explanation of Lord Grey's declaration, calmed them for the moment, but it was clear that whilst the agitation lasted, no confidence could be placed in their promised support. The Tithe question, indeed, now became, next to Reform, the great difficulty of the Government. This was seen a fortnight afterwards, in the debate on going into Committee on Mr. Stanley's Resolutions, when Mr. Brownlow, in a speech of more than two hours, took the extraordinary course of resisting the proposal; * and Mr. Sheil, in supporting him, again shot his poisoned arrows into the Liberal camp, for all his eloquence was employed to show

* The House received Mr. Brownlow's speech rather coldly. Macaulay told me he thought it was very clever. It was the first instance, within my knowledge, of the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church being recommended by a member of moderate political principles, high connections, and large landed property in Ireland. Mr. Brownlow belonged to an Orange family, and had been returned to Parliament by that party. He was a gentleman of high honour and much respected both in Ireland and in the House of Commons. His speeches on this occasion lost him his seat, but he was subsequently created Lord Lurgan.—AUTHOR.

that the Reform Bill would be the means of promoting and strengthening the agitation against the Church Establishment in Ireland. He was again encountered by Lord Althorp, whose reply, Mr. Leader observed, if delivered earlier in the night, before Mr. Stanley had spoken, would have prevented a division. It secured the votes of the Irish members, with very few exceptions; and the Resolutions were carried by large majorities. As Lord Althorp was leaving the House, Mr. Pendarves stopped him to say what a brilliant night it had been. "Far otherwise, I fear," he replied; "Sheil's speech has done us more harm than the division good." * Nor was he mistaken; for in the debate on the Third Reading of the Bill, Sir Robert Peel referred to the speech with considerable effect.

1832. Æt. 50.

It was an immense relief to Lord Althorp when two nights afterwards, the Committee, after twenty-two sittings, arrived at the end of the Bill. Two additional and equally laborious sittings were given

* I could not help ironically congratulating Mr. Sheil in the course of the evening, on the valuable support he had given to the Tories: —"What would you have me do?" he replied. "*We* shall get nothing by Reform. The Catholics and Liberals will return no additional members by it. The people insist on the abolition of tithe, and unless we speak to that effect we shall have very little chance of being here in the next Parliament. Besides, the Ministry have no claim upon us. We are quite different from Lord Killeen, Sir Patrick Bellew, and others who have received favour."

There was some foundation for Mr. Sheil's complaint. The independent Catholic members were certainly much overlooked in the distribution of Ministerial patronage. He felt this acutely, being, I really believe, personally attached to the Whigs, whose society he sought and enjoyed.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

to the Report. Lord Althorp's happened to be the last voice heard on it on the Ministerial side.

The Third Reading was moved on the 19th of March, and after a debate of three nights, in which the leading statesmen of both sides eminently distinguished themselves, the House divided, and the motion was carried by a majority of 116.*

The Reform Bill passes the Commons.

Lord Althorp's capacity as a leader had been severely tested throughout this tremendous struggle, and it extorted the praise even of his political opponents. I recollect Sir Henry Hardinge saying: † "It was Althorp carried the Bill. His fine temper did it. Once, in answer to a most able and argumentative speech of Croker, he rose and merely observed, 'that he had made some calculations which he considered as entirely conclusive in refutation of the Right Honourable gentleman's arguments, but unfortunately he had mislaid them, so that he could only say that if the House would be guided by his advice they would reject the amendment'—which they did accordingly. There was no standing against such influence as this." The Whigs ascribed Lord Althorp's influence not to his temper alone, but to the confidence felt by the House in his integrity and sound judgment—an

* The numbers were:—

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|---|---|
| For the Third Reading . . . . | 355 |
| Against . . . . . | 239 |
| Majority . . . | 116 |

The Bill finally passed without a division.—AUTHOR.

† I made a note of this at the time. Lord John Russell has noticed this fact in his remarks on the Reform Bill.—AUTHOR.

opinion so universal, that Lord Grey was induced by it to press upon him a Peerage, that he might take charge of the Bill in the Committee of the Lords—and the design was abandoned not from any hesitation or unwillingness on the part of Lord Althorp, but from the difficulty of finding a successor to him in the Commons. 1832. Æt. 50.

## CHAPTER XX.

### PROCEEDINGS IN THE LORDS AND COMMONS—RESIGNATION OF MINISTERS—BILL PASSED.

1832. Æt. 50.

Letter from Lord Althorp to Lord Grey respecting a creation of Peers.

WHILE congratulations poured in upon him on the increased majority with which the Bill had been carried in the Commons, Lord Althorp was looking with deep anxiety to the probabilities of its fate in the Lords. He had for some weeks entertained very faint expectations of any change in the policy of the majority of the Peers. He knew too well that the only hope of the Ministry lay in the waverers, whose influence he believed to have been greatly exaggerated. Nothing could be more loose than their engagements with Lord Grey;* and considering the dreadful consequences likely to follow the rejection of the Bill, in the excited state of the public mind, he thought the time was

* Lord Dover told me that he had gone over the list of waverers with Lord Grey. It comprised many Peers up to that time unsuspected of Reform tendencies. Lord Dover expressed his doubts of them. Lord Grey replied: "This one has written—Harrowby undertakes for this one, Wharncliffe for the other, and so on." The list gave the Ministry altogether a majority of 20. Lord Rosslyn, once a Whig, and always an honest man, on the other hand said to the Lord Chancellor (a very old friend), "We shall beat the Ministry this time, as we did the last. The changes are confined to a very small section." —AUTHOR.

now come when a large creation of Peers was strictly justifiable. He accordingly supported the proposals of the Lord Chancellor and Lord Durham to that effect in the Cabinet; and finding Lord Grey and Lord Lansdowne, and the Conservative section of the Ministry, not prepared for a course so bold, he had availed himself of his first moment of comparative leisure, on the very day that the Committee on the Bill had closed, to address the following letter to Lord Grey:— 1832. Æt. 50.

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL GREY.

"Downing Street, *March 10th*, 1832.

"My dear Lord Grey,

"I told you I would write you a letter. I do so because when I feel a decided opinion different from yours, I find it impossible in conversation with you to express it as strongly as I feel it. It is always the same with regard to my father. I sometimes, but seldom, differ in opinion with him, and when I do I cannot bring myself to express the difference to him in conversation. You will recollect a conversation I had with you in the summer of 1830, when I told you I would say to you what I would not say to any other man, because I was sure you would not take advantage of what I said, viz., that nothing on earth should induce me to take office but your saying that you would not take it, unless I did. I knew you comparatively very little then, and certainly the intimate acquaintance there has been between us since, has not diminished in any degree the feeling which made me say this to you. I have acted up to my word, and have sacrificed my happiness in so doing. I have made this preface to show you that there is no human being more attached to you than myself, and in order to excuse myself and to

1832. Æt. 50.

account for my asking you rather an extraordinary question, but one which I could not ask of any one on whose friendship I did not rely as entirely as I do on yours. The question is, whether you would create Peers for the purpose of carrying the Bill rather than that I should resign.

"I feel my honour and character so completely involved, both from what I have said in public and from my sense of what is right, in the duty of not allowing the Reform Bill to be lost without taking every practicable measure to prevent this calamity from happening, that I perhaps require more satisfactory evidence than I ought, of the certainty of carrying it. I know I do not agree with you in opinion when I say, that if the Bill be lost after a large creation of Peers, our characters are safe; but if it be lost without a creation of Peers, every one of us in whom the country at present places confidence, will be utterly and entirely ruined in character. I feel, therefore, that if a creation of Peers takes place, my character is safe; but that if it does not take place, then my character is placed upon the hazard of the success of the Bill. I feel, also, that if you refuse at all rates to make the Peers, and that I, in consequence of differing from you, resign, I avoid this hazard, running into perhaps another but a less danger. I say this, assuming that things remain as they are, and that Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe neither come forward with their friends to make such a declaration as would fully justify us to the public for running the risk, or rather such a one as would take away from us all justification for the creation of Peers. This may also be done, but not so effectually, by private written assurances. Assuming things then as they are, viz., that we have a probability of carrying the Second Reading of the Bill, but no just grounds of certainty whatever, even for ourselves, and not a pretence of any for the public, I think that if I consulted my own character only, I ought to say that, unless some overt act is done by Lord Harrowby and his friends to give the assurance which in my opinion is now wanting, I would resign unless Peers were made. The next doctrine is, that the first duty of a public man is to

preserve his character. I admit it, and feel it to be a high duty, but it partakes too much of a selfish character to be really his first duty. Cases may arise when it may be fit that he should even sacrifice, certainly that he should hazard his character, to do real service; I do not therefore say that I ought to resign because my character is in hazard; but I think it right to tell you frankly, that I do not feel that this is the course which would be best for my character if, things remaining the same, Peers are not made; and of course I mean it would be best for your character too, because, what is good for one, is good also for the other, under the present circumstances. I cannot, however, disguise from myself that my taking such a course would affect other things and other men besides myself, and that therefore I have no right to consider myself only. My resignation on such a ground, if it did not entirely destroy the Administration, would certainly so damage it that it would be hopeless to expect to carry the Bill. My choice therefore is between saving myself and destroying the Bill, and hazarding myself for a chance of carrying the Bill. The chance, however, of carrying the Bill without a large creation of Peers, appears to me to be very small indeed. We may have a probability, as I think we have, of carrying the Second Reading, but the chances are very much indeed against our getting through without the creation. Then for what is it that we hazard ourselves? Merely for the difference of whether the Peers shall be made subsequent, instead of previous to the Second Reading. I cannot say I think it is an advantage worth the hazard to be run for its attainment. 1832. Æt. 50.

"The difficulty, indeed, of creating Peers subsequent to the Second Reading appears to me quite as great as the creating them now. We may know better, a little better only, how many will be required, but against this is to be set the great doubt which will certainly arise, whether the occasion will justify the creation of any.

"I will not trouble you with any more writing, though I could write a great deal more; but I have done enough to

1832. Æt. 50.

show you how decided my opinion is, and it has not been adopted without a good deal of previous doubt and vacillation; not much, indeed, as to the policy of creating the Peers, but great as to whether I ought to allow the Bill to go to a Second Reading, unless they were created; and though my opinion is quite decided now, that the Peers ought to be created, I still have great doubts about the course which I individually ought to pursue.

"I have not alluded to my own private feelings, but they certainly have great weight in influencing me. I feel that my resigning on this ground would be most injurious to you, and that therefore having joined your Administration on the terms and for the reason to which I have referred in the beginning of this paper, I should be the last man who would do you irreparable mischief. Nothing would induce me to do this but being convinced that you were going to place yourself in a situation in which, though I might be ruined with you, I could not do you any service.

"Yours very sincerely,

"ALTHORP.

"Do not take the trouble of writing an answer to this."

Lord Grey's reply.

Lord Grey's letter in reply is worthy of his high character, and may be regarded as the best defence that has appeared of his conduct at this critical moment. It is worthy of comparison with the most masterly papers of Clarendon. At the recommendation of some valued political friends who, like myself, hold Lord Grey's memory in deep veneration, both as a statesman and a patriot, I have been induced to print the entire letter, although it is contained in his correspondence with the King.*

* V. ii., p. 262.

1832.
Æt. 50.

EARL GREY TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"DOWNING STREET, *March 11th*, 1832.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"Before entering into the very important subject of your letter, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of expressing my sincere and grateful feeling of the kindness and affection which mark it throughout. It is most true that you accepted office at my earnest desire, as an indispensable condition of my doing so; that it was attended with a very great sacrifice of your personal comforts; not greater, however, than that which I made of my own; that every thing that has passed since has confirmed and increased the confidence and good opinion with which you had before inspired me, into an affectionate friendship, which it is gratifying to me to think is equally felt by you, and which nothing, I trust, will ever diminish or impair.

"When we took office we thought that a Reform of Parliament could no longer be postponed. I had declared that opinion recently in the House of Lords. Acting upon it I proposed it as a condition on which the Administration was to be formed to the King, and he was graciously pleased to assent to it.

"The next step was to consider what the nature and extent of the proposed Reform should be; and after carefully weighing the whole matter, we were unanimously of opinion that if it was not a real and efficient Reform, it would fail in effecting the object we had in view, viz., the satisfaction and tranquillity of the public. The plan which has since been proposed in the two Bills was the result, and to this also His Majesty gave his assent.

"I forbear to follow it from its introduction into the House of Commons through all the difficulties which it has had to encounter, the contention to which it gave birth, the triumphant result of the appeal which was made upon it to public opinion by the Dissolution of Parliament,

1832. Æt. 50.

and the unfortunate rejection of the first Bill on the motion for its being read a second time in the House of Lords; these things must be sufficiently impressed on our minds to make it unnecessary to do more than thus summarily to recapitulate them with a view to their bearing on our present situation.

"From the beginning we were pledged to use our best efforts, and to exert all our power for the success of a measure which we deemed of vital importance to the best interests of the country — that obligation has been increased by the circumstances to which I have alluded, and by the almost unanimous support of a generous and confiding people. To the King we owe all that men can owe for the firm and unequivocal and uncompromising support which he has given us throughout.

"We are bound then, equally, by a loyal regard for the King, by the duty which we owe to him and to the country, and by the consideration of our own honour, not to shrink from any measure which all these interests prescribe under a firm conviction of its wisdom and necessity.

"This then is the question which we have to decide. We are bound to carry the measure of Reform if possible—but this does not bind us to the adoption of any means that may be proposed for this purpose. We must, I repeat it, be first satisfied that these means are consistent with the public welfare, and if, in some degree, doubtful and hazardous, imposed upon us by the necessity of the case. Is a large creation of Peers, in the present circumstances, justifiable upon these principles?

"I am sure it cannot be necessary for me to remind you how little such a measure was in our contemplation at the beginning of our proceedings on the measure of Reform. Even after the rejection of the first Bill by the House of Lords, you cannot have forgotten that when the King in graciously expressing his desire that we should not resign, stated his conviction that no Ministers could be found to propose to any Sovereign to consent to a very large creation of Peers for the purpose of carrying a new Bill, we unanimously

acquiesced in that opinion. Things in their progress since have forced upon our consideration what was originally thought impossible; we have been brought gradually to contemplate what once appeared to be an unqualified evil, as an absolute necessity; and the King, as these discussions proceeded, was brought at last, though most reluctantly, as was natural, to confide to us the power which we claimed to have reserved to us, to be exercised however, only in the last extremity and on certain conditions.

"The Bill has now passed the House of Commons, or may be considered as having passed, and as we must look to its being brought again to be decided by the House of Lords within three weeks, it is necessary for us, without further loss of time, to look to what that decision is likely to be and to take our measures accordingly.

"The questions then to be considered in this view are these: What expectation have we of a favourable division in the House of Lords? If the Second Reading should be carried, what security have we that the Bill will not be mortally injured in the Committee? Whether, if such should be the result, we can exercise the power which we now have for the purpose of remedying the evil? or whether it would be better, looking to such a result as would be fatal to the Bill in the Committee as most probable, we should be justified in having recourse to a large creation of Peers, at once to anticipate the mischief? There is also a further and most important question, whether a large creation of Peers under such circumstances would not be itself exposed to the greatest danger of failing?

"1. To the first of these questions my answer is, that according to the best information I can obtain, the majority on the Second Reading in the House of Lords appears to me to be nearly certain. So certain that, as far as that stage of the proceeding is concerned, I do not think that we could justly state that the necessity, which we all admit to be the only justification of the measure we are discussing, now exists. You require some evidence of this in the public declaration of Peers who have privately assured us of their

1832. Æt. 50.

support on this occasion. Such declarations they are prepared and wish to make; they even left the time to my choice; and for the reason of which you are aware, I thought the best opportunity would be on the introduction of the Bill into the House of Lords. This justification of our abstaining from a measure which the public expect, will not therefore be wanting.

"2. To the second question I cannot give so satisfactory an answer. Those who have promised to support the second reading do so avowedly with the intention of proposing in the Committee alterations which would lessen their general objections to the Bill. But convinced that a large measure of Reform is necessary, they declare that they do not wish to defeat it by a subversion of its main principles. They are ready to acquiesce in Schedule A, in the enfranchisement of the large towns, and in the 10*l.* qualification, only passing such regulations as might secure it against abuse, and might be consistent with the intention of its proposers in making it a *bonâ fide* qualification. I am quite aware that, under colour of such a regulation, the qualification itself might be injuriously affected. But surely this is a fair subject for consideration; and we should hardly be justified in proceeding to a measure of extreme force, merely from the apprehensions that such an effect might be produced. It might, however, be produced, and even minor alterations might be made, which, though it might be possible to submit to them separately, would in the aggregate amount to such a change in the general effect and character of the Bill, that it would no longer be the measure of efficiency to which we are pledged. There is also the further danger attending this part of the question, of repeated defeats in the Committee, at once increasing the impatience and discontent of the public, and in the same proportion injuring the character of the Government, and withdrawing the confidence by which it is now supported. I admit this to be a consideration of extreme doubt and difficulty. It is undoubtedly possible that we may find ourselves so embarrassed that it may not be in our power to

retrieve the mischief which may have been done. But reserving the right of making Peers for that stage of the proceeding, if it should become necessary, we shall at least have proved our determination not to resort to it while any other chance remained; and the evidence of the necessity of the act would be so clear that it would carry with it its own justification. This would not be the case at present; we should now certainly be charged with having wantonly had recourse to a measure, which the assurances of support we had received showed that we might have dispensed with. Besides, though there are dangers in the Committee, there are also chances in our favour. The strength of the Government, we have every reason to expect, will be compact and entire; that of our opponents, it is not impossible, will be divided; and upon a fair balance of all these considerations my opinion is that we ought to stand as we are, at least for the Second Reading. The third and fourth questions are anticipated in the answer which I have thus given to the second, and it is unnecessary to dwell further upon them.

1832. Æt. 50.

"If on considering these questions my opinion is decided for abstaining at present from exercising the power which the King has so generously confided to us, that opinion is confirmed by the last, and in my mind, the most important consideration of what would be the certainty of success in creating fifty or even sixty Peers at the present moment.

"Here I confess my extreme repugnance to the measure makes me distrust my own judgment. I apply my reason to it with all the care I can, but I am conscious that my feeling is stronger than my reason. It is a measure of extreme violence; there is no precedent for it in our history, the case of Queen Anne's Peers not being in point; it is a certain evil, dangerous itself as a precedent; and with all these objections, in my opinion very uncertain of success.

"The majority against us was 41; the conversions, from which we now look forward to a more favourable result on the Second Reading, would turn against us almost to a

1832. Æt. 50.

man; many of those on whom we now depend would, I believe, certainly leave us; and there is no saying how far a defection, to which the natural feeling of the House of Lords would tend, might be carried. We should be exposed then to a great risk of failure even on the second reading. Would our difficulties be much diminished even in the Committee, where the whole body of Opposition would be brought together, their mutual discontents composed, and their hostility to the Government increased and inflamed with additional rancour and acrimony? I really believe, therefore, that we should fail. But in such a failure you may say our characters would be safe. I doubt it. We should be exposed to attacks of another kind, in which that part of the community which must be regarded as the soundest and the best would probably join. Even the most violent, who have no affection for us, and whose object it is to vilify all public men, and to wean public opinion from the settled institutions of the Government, would cry out against us, as they do now, for want of vigour and energy in not having made enough. But our personal characters are not the only consideration. This is too clear to have escaped the attention of a person actuated by your just and honourable motives; and indeed, it is admitted by you. What then would be the effect in the country? Would the indignation directed against the House of Lords be less after the creation of Peers, in the event of another failure, than before it? Would not all the dangers which we now apprehend be equally incurred? and can you believe that our characters would save us in the general wreck that would ensue? My belief is the danger of a general combination against the Government would not be less, and that its consequences would be worse; and after all, suppose we should succeed for a time, would the Government have strength to go on without a further creation of Peers? What has happened in France, allowing for all the dissimilarity of the two countries, may afford an example of what we might expect. The House of Lords would probably become unmanageable in our hands; and if we should be

displaced, the succeeding Government would be under the necessity of making a further addition to it; and then what would become of the constitutional character and efficiency of this branch of the Legislature? 1832. Æt. 50.

"The result then is, that all these considerations press on my mind with so irresistible a weight, that I really cannot bring myself to the adoption of a measure to which, as we now stand, there appear to me to be such insurmountable objections. I never had, I believe, at any time an overweening confidence in my own opinions. I am accused indeed sometimes of giving way too much to those of others. I do not wish to defend myself against this charge. I am not ashamed of abandoning an opinion when I am satisfied that it is wrong. In the present case, what can be a stronger proof of the sincerity of my conviction, than that it holds out against the opinions of the Chancellor, yourself, Holland, and many persons whom I not only esteem and love for their personal qualities, but who, I am convinced, have the strongest feelings of regard and attachment to me individually? It is painful to differ from such persons, but our conviction is not dependent on our will.

"With regard to the question which you put to me, I will take example from your frankness in answering it. As at present advised, I do not think any thing would induce me to be a consenting party to a large creation of Peers. The consequence then of your resignation would be, the immediate breaking up of the Government; for if I refused to come in, I should now find it still more impossible to go on, without you.

"I have written this as fast as I could, after reading your letter. More time would have enabled me to state better all I feel on this subject, and even to bring forward much that I am sensible I have omitted; but I was anxious, as soon as possible, to convey to you the impression which your letter has made on me, for the kindness of which I must once more offer you my heartfelt thanks.

"Believe me, &c.,

"GREY.

1832. Æt. 50.

"I should like to have this letter back again at your leisure, that I may have a copy taken of it.

"A sad account from Kilkenny; the first trial has ended in an acquittal against the clearest and most positive evidence."

The Bill taken up to the Lords.

The Bill was duly taken up to the Lords on the 26th of March, by Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell. It was observed that the train of their supporters had lessened since they last presented themselves with the same Message, but this arose only from many of them having posted themselves about the Throne in expectation of the debate. The motion for the First Reading being put, there was at first a dead silence. Lord Harrowby then rose, and in a speech of more eloquence than force, announced his intention of voting for the Second Reading. Lord Wharncliffe followed in the same strain. He was so nervous that his voice failed him, and but for the extreme stillness of the House, he would not have been audible. Neither received any encouragement from the other Peers, except from their friend Lord Haddington. It certainly did not look as if they were in a majority. Lord Grey made a dignified and judicious reply.

The Second Reading was fixed for the 9th of April. In this interval the canvassing for votes on both sides was unprecedented. Lord Coventry, a nobleman who from various causes had mixed but little in society, gave an amusing account of the solicitations that had been made to him. "I never before," he said, "was fully aware of the

usefulness of indecision. It has raised me quite to importance. I have received more invitations to dinner this week than I had for years, and my hand has been squeezed by men who had long scarcely condescended to notice me." 1832. Æt. 50.

Dialogue between Lord Althorp and Mr. Francis Baring.

On the morning of the debate, Mr. Francis Baring,* one of the Lords of the Treasury, an intimate friend of Lord Althorp's, went to him about some official business that required immediate attention; and after they had dispatched it, Mr. F. Baring observed that until the Reform Bill was settled, he would of course be very busy. The following dialogue then took place between them :—

*A.* On the contrary; I have very little to do now, comparatively.

*B.* Yes, probably you have no particular business pressing, but you must naturally feel anxious as to the result, and it might be troublesome.

*A.* No, I don't feel at all anxious. (He then shut the door.) I feel confident that we shall carry it. (I said something, and he repeated they were sure, but the majority would be small.)

*B.* I don't think it signifies much what your majority is, for you can never carry it through the Committee without Peers.

* Afterwards Lord Northbrook. Lord Althorp regarded Mr. Baring as a man of great ability, and still greater integrity. "I call him," Lord Althorp said to me, "my conscience." He looked on him, I believe, as his future successor. There was no opinion on Treasury matters he valued so highly as Mr. Baring's. Many traits of resemblance might be noticed between them: each having the same simplicity of manner, the same downright honesty, and the same desire for the public good. I shall have occasion to dwell more on his character in a later page.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

*A.* You were against making Peers.

*B.* So I was, and am still of the same opinion. I consider it as a greater change than your Bill.

*A.* It completes the revolution.

*B.* But it is a different case after the Lords have read it a second time.

*A.* I don't think so. On the contrary, it will be worse making them to carry particular points.

*B.* The course you have taken will be judged by the result. If you succeed you will be considered as great men; if not, you stand a fair chance of being hung. There is a very strong feeling, I believe, in the country against making Peers, but those who now object to it will be the first to abuse you if you fail.

*A.* I don't find that feeling anywhere except in the House. There is undoubtedly there an unwillingness to make Peers.

*B.* You must judge from that what the opinion of the country will be on the subject some time hence. I think you will have chosen the proper course, but it is attended with some risk.

*A.* We shall carry our Second Reading, but I doubt whether by such a majority as will satisfy the country that we ought to have run the risk.

*B.* If you don't carry your Bill, it will be all up with you.

*A.* We are dished for ever—we are gone. For my part, as I have been telling Graham, my case is very easy. At one blow I shall expiate the great fault of my life, having ever entered into Politics.

I ought never to have meddled with them. I shall break it off at once, go down into the country and have nothing more to do with them. To be sure, one must not look at the papers for some time. 1832. Æt. 50

Mr. F. Baring says: "Some desultory conversation then ensued. My impression was that his wish had been for the making of Peers, but I am not sure of this, and it was contrary to his former conversations. He said nothing under sixty could at any time have secured the Bill. As I went, he said, that if we carried the Second Reading, he thought we could get fairly through the Committee." *

The debate began on the 9th, and lasted four nights. Lord Grey opened it with a very fine speech, admirably adapted to the occasion, being clear, dignified, and eminently prudent and persuasive. Lord Harewood observed to a friend just before he rose, "All depends on Lord Grey; if he is moderate, his majority will be considerable." When he sat down, it seemed from the countenances of the Peers as if the prediction would be realized.

Without entering into the details of the debate, I may mention that Lord Harrowby redeemed his deficiencies on the First Reading of the Bill, and fully justified the high opinion of him entertained by Mr. Pitt, whilst the Duke of Wellington lost his temper, and so far forgot himself as to say, that the King and the Administration were in a league

* This is transcribed from a paper in Mr. F. Baring's hand-writing, which I owe to the kindness of Lord Northbrook.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

with men who would go to any extremity of violence to attain their ends. His comments on the waverers so irritated Lord Wharncliffe, that the latter came breathing fury to the Chancellor (who had intended to speak next), entreating that he might be allowed to answer him. This he did with a heartiness and vigour which, if he had not spoken for nearly three hours, would have been very effective.

Lord Grey's reply was magnificent. "Taking into consideration," said Mr. Macaulay to me, "the time of the night, or rather of the day, the exhaustion of the subject, the length of the debate, and Lord Grey's age, it was almost unparalleled."

The Bill read a second time in the Lords.

The majority of 9 * was much below what had been expected by the party; and the difficulties of carrying the Bill through Committee seemed almost insurmountable.

After an adjournment of three weeks, the Committee met, and one sitting virtually decided the fate of the Bill—and at the same time brought the country to the brink of Revolution. That Lord Lyndhurst, in moving his memorable amendment for the postponement of the Disfranchising Clauses, had the intention of precipitating a Ministerial crisis, was fully believed by those who knew, as Lord Brougham once said to me of him, that he was fond of mischief to such a degree, as not to be restrained by considerations of prudence or pat-

* A few days before the division, Mr. Wood (now Viscount Halifax) had calculated on this very number Mr. Holmes, probably with the view of misleading his opponents, said it would be 18.—AUTHOR.

riotism. He certainly laid himself open to the hostile construction put on his conduct by Lord Grey, whose boldness in at once staking the existence of the Bill, and of the Ministry, on the issue of the division, proved in the end the safeguard of both. At the time, a large section on each side of the House was confused by the sudden turn of affairs, and could not understand it. Indeed, many of the Peers had only just come up from the country, and stepped from their carriages into the House to enquire what was going on. Some of the Tories treated Lord Grey's declaration as a threat, whilst some of the Whigs (in my hearing) regretted it as rash and uncalled for. The Peers, with few exceptions—as usually happens when a question is imperfectly understood and the House is taken by surprise—voted according to party, and the Ministers were of course completely defeated, being left in a minority of thirty-five.

1832. Æt. 50.

Lord Althorp was present during most of the debate, for the House of Commons having been counted out at an early hour, he joined the crowd of members below the Bar who were eagerly watching to see how this unexpected contest would end. Lord Grey was observed to consult him frequently as the debate proceeded, and there can be no doubt, obtained his hearty concurrence. After the House had risen Lord Althorp accompanied Lord Grey into the Chancellor's private room, where the leading members of the Cabinet soon collected and came to an unanimous resolution to resign, unless

Ministry defeated in Committee.

1832. Æt. 50.

Resolution to resign.

the King would create a sufficient number of Peers to give them a working majority in favour of the Bill.

The first impressions made by this division on some of the men eminent for ability and character among the Reformers materially differed. Early on the following morning, some of the leading Radicals, headed by Mr. James Mill,* waited on the Lord Chancellor in great alarm, and represented to him the risk of serious disturbances throughout the country in the event of a change of Ministry; they also urged in strong terms the expediency of supporting any new Government, even of Tories, on the condition of carrying the Bill. The thoughts of the deputation seemed absorbed in their fears of a popular outbreak. Speaking of the lower classes Mr. Mill observed, "We must recollect, after all, they are our masters," an expression quite new to me at that time.

Whilst this scene took place at the Lord Chan-

* Mr. James Mill, the historian of India, the author of a well-known Essay on Government, and of other political Tracts. His views of Parliamentary Reform went far beyond those of the Whigs, who ranked in his estimation as a timid, narrow-minded party. He was, I believe, a Republican. His independence and honesty were above suspicion. His son, Mr. John Stuart Mill, has walked in his steps, and added lustre to the name.—AUTHOR.

I was well acquainted with Mr. James Mill, and was in the habit of seeing him about this time. A few days before the introduction of the Reform Bill, he told me that he had just met Lord Brougham, who had said to him, "The Reform Bill will even satisfy *you*." To which he had replied, "I shall be satisfied if you give the franchise to every man having an income of 100*l.* a-year." I mention this to show that he was not a man of very impracticable views—he was always a strong supporter of the Ballot.—LORD BELPER.

cellor's, Mr. Jeffrey, the oracle of the Scotch Whigs, might have been seen in Downing Street pressing dark apprehensions upon Lord Althorp. His object in coming thus early was to ask what course should be taken with the Scotch Reform Bill, which it had been intended that he should bring forward that evening. With him the advent of the Tories to power was a matter of certainty; and considering the Reform Bill as abandoned, he looked forward, almost in despair, to the repression of all public spirit by military force, and the establishment of an organised system of mis-government and oppression. He gives in a letter to a friend an amusing account of this interview. "I had," he says, "a characteristic scene with that most frank, true, and stout-hearted of God's creatures (Lord Althorp). He had not come downstairs, and I was led up to his dressing-room, where I found him sitting on a stool in a dark duffle dressing-gown, with his arms bare above the elbows, and his beard half-shaved, with a desperate razor in one hand and a great soap-brush in the other. He gave me the loose finger of his brush hand, and with the usual twinkle of his bright eye and a radiant smile, he said, 'You need not be anxious about your Scotch Bills to-night, as I have the pleasure to tell you, we are no longer His Majesty's Ministers.'"* 1832. Æt. 50.

Lord Althorp's apparent ease of mind arose from his conviction, that the Tories were prepared to take up the Reform Bill, and that they would carry it,

* Cockburn's Memoirs of Lord Jeffrey, v. i., p. 330.

1832. Æt. 50.

which he now despaired of the Whigs being able to do.* His delight at the prospect of quitting office also influenced him, I fear, to the prejudice of his judgment. He entertained no doubt of the King's readiness to accept the resignation of the Ministry. For some time, he had perceived an unusual degree of coldness and embarrassment in the King's manner towards the Ministers generally, which, coupled with the querulous remarks known to have escaped him on the democratic spirit of the Liberals, convinced him that His Majesty's confidence in the Ministry had been withdrawn.

The King's refusal of the terms proposed by the Ministers quickly transpired; and a meeting of the leading Whigs took place the same day at Brooks's, when it was arranged that Lord Ebrington should immediately give a notice in the House, for the following day, of an address to the Crown on the present state of public affairs. Great pains were taken to keep this intention from Lord Althorp, lest his scrupulous sense of duty might lead him to prevent such an interference with the formation of the new Government.

In the afternoon the King held a levee, which Lord Althorp attended, and was most graciously received. It was much noticed that the King hardly spoke to the Duke of Wellington, whilst he paid particular attention to the ex-Ministers. He went so far indeed as to press the Lord Chancellor

* It seems not to have occurred to him that the Tories must first obtain the concurrence of the public.—AUTHOR.

to remain in office with the new Government.* No such compliment was offered to Lord Althorp, but a higher one, and far more to his taste, was in store for him. Repairing, after a hasty dinner, to the House of Commons to perform the not unwelcome task of announcing the resignation of the Ministry, no sooner did he enter the House, than he was greeted by the most tremendous cheers.† So loud and so general was the acclamation, that he seemed almost bewildered, and took his seat in some

1832. Æt. 50.

* The Lord Chancellor had a private audience of more than half an hour, in which the King pressed him most urgently not to give up the Great Seal. The King also reminded him of what had passed when he came into office; "I told you then," he said, "that you were *my* Chancellor—besides, after all, the office is a civil and not a political one." The Chancellor replied that the Constitution had made it the latter, as he thought unwisely, so that he had no alternative. The King wept, but the Chancellor was firm and withdrew. The day after he wrote to the King, thanking him for his kindness, and regretting his inability to avail himself of it. The King repeated his previous protestations of regard, and there the matter ended.

This was stated to me by Lord Brougham at the time.—AUTHOR.

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The Lord Chancellor showed throughout these transactions the most firm allegiance to Lord Grey. When he returned from his mission with Lord Grey to Windsor, he found a note waiting for him from Lord Devon, in these terms, "I am in the greatest suspense; tell me, I entreat, is all right?" He at once replied, "To be sure it is all right, you blockhead. How can it be otherwise, when we have done what is right?"

I was with him at half-past eleven, when a note was brought to him which he read out; it was very short:—

"Our resignations are accepted.

"GREY."

He observed that this was only what he expected, and he seemed in no way disturbed.—AUTHOR.

† The *Times* states that the House was crowded on the occasion, and that "Lord Althorp, on his entrance, was instantly hailed with enthusiastic cheers and cries, accompanied by plaudits both of hands and feet, in which some of the strangers joined most cordially."—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

confusion. It was remembered, that when Sir Robert Peel first appeared in the House after his resignation, there was no cheering whatever. After silence could be obtained, Lord Althorp rose, and, with unusual distinctness, announced the resignation of the Ministers, simply adding, that they took this step because the recent proceedings in the Lords made it impossible for them to carry the Reform Bill in the state which their duty and their promises alike required. He added, that they only held office until their successors were appointed. This announcement was followed by a renewal of the cheering, almost equally loud and long continued as before. Encouraged by this demonstration of feeling, Lord Ebrington then gave his notice of a motion for the next day of an Address to the Crown on the state of public affairs; and, Lord Althorp, as had been anticipated, raised objections to it as premature. It has been insinuated that this was a little scene of theatrical artifice;* and Lord Althorp is compared, by the Radical historian, to Mark Antony protesting against any violence, in his address to the people at Cæsar's funeral, a course that would have been entirely inconsistent with the candour and straightforwardness of Lord Althorp. All who witnessed his demeanour on this occasion, even if strangers to the man, would have pronounced him to be no actor. The loud protests of the friends of Reform against any delay of the motion overruled his appeal. His delicacy, how-

* Roebuck's History, v. ii., p. 29[2].

ever, was not appreciated by the Tories, who made various unsuccessful efforts to draw from him a statement of the advice given by the Ministers to the King, and the grounds on which it was offered and rejected; not that they were ignorant of either, or could have forgotten that, without the King's consent, no such statement could be made public. The House adjourned at an early hour. 1832. Æt. 50.

Notwithstanding the support thus given to Lord Ebrington, he expressed himself the next morning to the Chancellor as by no means sanguine with regard to the result of his motion. The nominal friends of the ex-Ministers he believed to be far more numerous than the real ones, and he was apprehensive of a considerable falling off in the hour of trial. Lord Duncannon and Mr. Ellice were of the same opinion.

Efforts of the Tories to form a Government.

In the course of the day much was heard of the activity of Lord Lyndhurst in forming the new Administration, and his confidence of success. He assured one of his former dependents* that there was no truth in the report of the Great Seal being intended for Sir John Leach. He should take it himself, and he appeared to have no doubts of his immediate return to office, and desired preparations to be made for it accordingly. The ex-Ministers put no obstructions in his way. Lord Althorp spent part of the day in a nursery-garden, choosing and

* Mr. Haines, the Gentleman of the Chamber, a person of great probity and intelligence, to whom Lord Lyndhurst was much attached.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

buying flowers, brought home five large packages in his carriage, and devoted a long time to considering where they should be planted in the garden at Althorp, writing directions and drawing plans for that arrangement.* Office had been the reverse of Paradise to him, and he cast no longing, lingering look behind on quitting it.

Lord Ebrington moves an Address.

There was that night again a crowded House, and increased excitement. The Address, moved by Lord Ebrington, had been framed in a cautious and temperate strain, simply deprecating the appointment of any Ministry not prepared to carry into effect, unimpaired, all the essential provisions of the Reform Bill; his speech was rather in defence of the course taken by the Ministers, than in attack of their opponents. His seconder, Mr. Strutt,† member for Derby, a young man, whose family shared with the Arkwrights pre-eminence in the manufacturing interests of the midland counties of England, went much farther. He boldly denounced the Tory chiefs as unfit to be trusted with the charge of the Reform Bill. "If, indeed," he said, "the time shall ever come when we are willing to submit our victorious armies to the command of the officers of the enemy; if we shall ever call the

Mr. Strutt seconds it.

* Cockburn's Memoirs of Lord Jeffrey, v. i., p. 332.—AUTHOR.

† Now Lord Belper and Lord Lieutenant of Notts. Some years after this memorable night, he entered the Ministry as Chairman of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, and subsequently he became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. His conduct, both in public and private life, has attached deserved credit to his name.—AUTHOR.

culprits from the bar to the judgment seats,—then, and not till then, will I consent to intrust the construction and management of this Bill to those who have shown themselves its avowed enemies or its reluctant and wavering supporters."* It was in vain that Mr. Baring tried, in a long and elaborate reply, to weaken the force of these observations, and as a last resource he again called on Lord Althorp for an explanation of the grounds of the Ministerial differences with the King; but this proved an utter failure. Lord Althorp met the interrogations with a candour and ingenuousness which presented a singular contrast to the elaborate speech of his opponent, for whose "better satisfaction," he stated, "the advice we thought it our duty to offer to his Majesty was, that he should create a number of Peers, sufficient to enable us to carry the Reform Bill in an efficient form." The sensation that followed this avowal elicited such a tempest of cheers as I never heard before. Lord Dover, with whom I was sitting under the Gallery, turned round to me and observed, that he questioned whether the members imprisoned by Charles I. were more loudly cheered on their return to the House after their release from imprisonment. The answer Lord Althorp gave to the charge against the Ministers of attempting to bully the King, was equally successful, especially his appeal to the House, whether the language used by Mr. Baring in saying, "that we fly in the face of our master," was

1832. Æt. 50.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. vii., p. 787.

1832. Æt. 50.

the language fit to address to a Minister of the Crown in the House of Commons, or the way in which Mr. Baring would advise the Ministers to discharge their duty under a great responsibility. His explanation had the merit of satisfying the House, without giving displeasure to the King. He referred to the proceedings in the Lords to show that it was possible to form an Administration out of the ranks of the Tories to carry the Bill without vital alterations. A magnificent speech by Mr. Macaulay rather startled the moderate Whigs, whilst Sir Robert Peel, though very eloquent, betrayed his distrust of the policy of his party.

The division was—

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes . . . . . | 288 |
| Noes . . . . . | 208 |
| Majority . . . . | 80 |

The Whig leaders insisted that there was still an under-current in the feeling of the Parliament against opposition to the King, and the fate of the Ministry remained in doubt.

The proceedings in the House on Friday were confined to angry discussions arising out of Petitions for Reform, in which no Whig of eminence took a part except Lord Althorp, who tried, apparently with some success, to keep within legitimate bounds the impetuosity of his Liberal supporters.

The Duke of Wellington accepts

On Saturday the acceptance of the Premiership by the Duke of Wellington was understood to be

settled, and other names were confidently mentioned for offices in his Government. 1832. Æt. 50.

The Sunday was no day of rest among politicians. Such goings to and fro, such busy faces, such questions and answers throughout the Tory circles, as seemed to indicate the eve of a new administration! Neither were the Whigs quite idle; a great meeting of the party was held at Brooks's that night, at which Lord Ebrington, Mr. Hume, and other leaders, now strongly urged the rejection of any Reform Bill which the new Ministers might prepare, be it what it might, whilst Lord Althorp, on the other hand, was for accepting it, but on the understanding that the acceptance was to be no bar to future demands. Mr. Stanley on this occasion particularly distinguished himself. He jumped on the table, and in a most stirring and eloquent speech attacked the new Ministers and the Tory aristocracy most unsparingly. It would be hardly fair to record some of the expressions he used in the warmth of the moment, especially as he ended by supporting the course recommended by Lord Althorp. This was adopted by the meeting with some reluctance, as the feelings of the majority were in favour of violent measures. the Premiership.

The next morning (Monday) Lord Ebrington complained to the Chancellor of the result of the meeting, and persisted in his intention of combining with Mr. Hume to propose a very strong resolution condemnatory of the Duke of Wellington. Several eminent Whigs among the

1832. Ætat. 50. Peers approved of this course—whilst Mr. Pendarves, and many of the other Whig county members in the Commons, preferred letting the new Ministry come in without opposition; leaving it to the country to decide who were to hold the Government. The country had, I believe, already decided; for the accounts received from large towns were of a character that might have extinguished the hopes of the new aspirants to office, a Tory government being universally deprecated, although coupled with the promise of a Reform Bill. I was assured that Sir Robert Peel, who had up to this time not declared himself, now took the alarm, and positively refused to enter the Ministry. At a great dinner, however, at the Carlton Club, he commended the Duke's conduct in no qualified terms, and urged the party to follow him, wherever he might lead, as the saviour of his country.

The House filled early on Monday. Such of the new Ministers (expectant) as were present appeared in excellent spirits. Sir Henry Hardinge stepped over to Lord Althorp before the debate began, and told him that the real difficulties of forming the Administration were at an end, and he hoped that Lord Althorp did not disapprove of the Duke's conduct. He seemed too elated to listen to Lord Althorp's cold and unsatisfactory answer, and soon rose to answer Lord Ebrington's question as to the Duke of Wellington's having accepted office on the condition of bringing in a Reform Bill. Lord Ebrington's language was very strong, but not too

strong for the temper of the House, for he was loudly cheered, when he described such conduct as an act of gross public immorality; nor did Hardinge's explanation, which implied a denial of the imputed conduct, improve the aspect of the case. A most animated debate followed; Mr. Baring's ingenuity and casuistry were again employed to represent the Duke as having come to the King's assistance when abandoned by his Ministers, taking the only course which, under the circumstances, was left open to him. Mr. Baring's comments on the language of the Whigs with respect to the Duke's conduct drew from Lord Althorp a more emphatic censure than he had yet expressed of the Tory leaders. He went, indeed, so far as to say that this charge of public immorality had been aimed at those individuals, who, having opposed the Reform Bill in its principle and details, were nevertheless ready to accept office, with the view of carrying the very measure they had so strenuously resisted. This was the immorality which had been referred to, and he could not think the expressions stronger than were merited on the occasion. He felt that as the leader of the Liberal party some such declaration might fairly be expected from him, nor was it complained of by his opponents. It was moderate, indeed, compared with the speeches of Mr. Macaulay and Lord John Russell. They carried the House so completely with them, that little attention was paid to the speeches of Sir Edward Sugden and Sir George Murray on the other side. What

1832. Æt. 50.

1832. Æt. 50.

damaged the Tories most, however, was the disavowal of their proceedings by Sir Robert Inglis; and, when he denounced the proposed adoption of Reform by the new Government as one of the most fatal violations of public confidence that could be inflicted, it was felt that no hope remained for the advocates of such a policy. One after another, the Tory members urged the return of the Whig Ministers to office, and as soon as the House was up, the Speaker assured the Duke of the hopelessness of the task he had undertaken.

The following extract from a Journal that I kept at the time will give some notion of the agitation that prevailed.

"Tuesday was an exciting day. The opinion was rapidly gathering that a new Administration was impracticable. Peel was understood still to withhold his support. The Chancellor thought he would yield at last, and there is no doubt it would have been the boldest and wisest course if he wished to preserve his party. It is reported and believed that he differed with the Duke on the expediency of an immediate dissolution. The Duke thought it the only mode of establishing the new Government; Peel dreaded civil war. Both, perhaps, were in the right. The latter certainly would have had an uneasy berth at Tamworth. Hill* told me that the Union would have sent such a body of their members to that place during the election, that Peel's return would have been impracticable. The accounts from the country now poured in, and were of the most alarming

* M. D. Hill, Recorder of Birmingham, afterwards M.P. for Hull, and an intimate friend of Lord Brougham; a man of a vigorous, rather than of a refined mind. His brother Rowland is the author of the penny postage.—AUTHOR.

description. Parkes came on a deputation from Birmingham. He told me, that it was with extreme difficulty that the people could be kept from coming to extremities. Hill described the state of public feeling there very forcibly. 'The people,' he said, 'are so excited, that anything at all unusual throws them into confusion. A man blowing a horn is immediately taken for an express, and the arrival of a coach from London at an unusual hour emptied the workshops in an instant. Very little work is done. The workmen walk about, talking of nothing but the Bill.' The account of the vote of the Lords was received as a public calamity. The churches and dissenting chapels tolled their bells the whole night. Well might the General in command be alarmed. He wrote to Lord Hill that he was wholly incapable of resistance in case of an insurrection. His whole force consisted of two troops of the Greys within the town, and two companies of infantry at Dudley. Lord Hill, however, spoke very lightly to Lord Althorp of the danger. At the United Service Club little else was talked of. Strickland * showed me a letter from some of his leading constituents at Saddleworth. They told him that people were tired of signing petitions and addresses. They wished to fight it out at once, and the sooner the better. The fight was believed so near at hand, that a manufacturer offered to supply the Birmingham Union with 10,000 muskets at 15*s.* a-piece. The Unions received an immense increase to their numbers during the week. Bob Smith† told me that in his part of Bucks, the respectable classes came to the resolution of not acting as special constables. In Birmingham the magistrates represented to the General in command, that there was not a man in the town who would act."

1832. Æt. 50.

The attempt of the Tories to obtain possession of

* Sir George Strickland, Bart., of Boynton, Yorkshire, and M.P for the county.—AUTHOR.

† Mr. Smith, M.P. for Bucks, afterwards Lord Carington.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

Recall of Lord Grey by the King.

the Government having failed, Lord Grey was necessarily recalled; but the events of the week had only added to the difficulties of his position; for whilst the Reformers were now heated almost beyond his control, the Tory Peers, exasperated by defeat, seemed determined to prolong at any risk a contest that threatened the destruction of their order. Fresh terms, it is understood, were accordingly submitted to the King, and for three days his decision upon them remained in doubt. During this interval the hopes of the Tories revived; and the Queen, who had warmly espoused their cause, wrote, even after the King had seen Lord Grey, to an intimate friend, "I do not despair yet." Lord Dover told me that he had seen the letter.

It is said that Sir Herbert Taylor suggested the bold step of the King's letter to the Tory Peers to secure their non-attendance, and this is more to his honour, as he was a Tory of the old school, and had always kept up some connection with the party. He said to me at the time, "I should have opposed the Bill in every stage had I remained in the House of Commons—but I see that it is for the King's interest that it should be carried, and I have done my best to assist the Ministers accordingly."*

* Sir Herbert Taylor was the younger son of Mr. Taylor of Bifrons, in Kent—a country gentleman of good property. I have heard that he owed his rise in life to the circumstance of two of his brothers being accidentally drowned in a manner that excited general compassion, and especially with the Royal family. He was presented with a commission in the Guards, and soon attached to the staff of the Duke of York, whom he accompanied in the campaigns of 1794–5, and subsequently he became private secretary to the King (George the

It was only after the country had been kept in suspense from the Tuesday, that at half-past four on the Friday the King summoned Earl Grey and the Lord Chancellor to acquaint them with the promised secession of the Tory Peers. 1832. Æt. 50.

After an audience of half an hour they drove straight to the House of Lords with this joyful intelligence, which Lord Grey at once conveyed to Lord Althorp through Mr. Stanley, whom he met on the stairs. It spread through the House of Commons like an electric shock, and the majority of the Tories seemed hardly less pleased than the Whigs, such had been the general alarm at the state of public feeling. Even Lord Althorp had latterly thought very ill of the position of the country, and when many of the members, on his coming down to the House, accosted him with anxious inquiries, little of any cheerful import could be drawn from his answers. He now rose, with radiant looks, to announce the continuance of the Ministers in office, while he also held out expectations of passing the Bill, which, coming as they did from him, seemed to dispel previous forebodings. Secession of the Tory Peers.

Third), during the blindness of the latter, and obtained great credit for his intelligence and integrity. He was deservedly a favourite in the Royal family, for he united most pleasing manners with genuine kindness of heart. The narrative he wrote of the last illness of the Duke of York had a large circulation, and certainly made the most of the Duke's good qualities. Sir Herbert retired from public life on the death of the King, whom he did not long survive. His health had suffered from the confinement and hard work inseparable from his office, and his latter days were embittered by the death of his children. I can conscientiously pay this humble tribute to the memory of a man for whom I entertained a sincere regard.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

It has been observed that the immediate effect of his simple assurance, in that crowded and excited assembly, showed how strong was the confidence reposed in him.

Third Reading of the Bill in the Lords.

The Bill was now virtually passed. The Committee in the Lords, in a few days, resumed its sittings, when the Opposition Peers, in their anger, carried out their promises of secession to an extent that necessarily detracted from the dignity of the House. Nor could they be satisfied without proclaiming their own surrender and humiliation. There was hardly a show of a division on the Third Reading. A few amendments were made, in which the Commons acquiesced in one sitting, after some rather angry speeches from the Tory members; and the Bill having been returned to the House of Lords, received the Royal Assent on the 7th of June.

Royal assent given to the Bill.

There were very few Peers in the House during the ceremony of giving the Royal Assent. The Ministers, in their anxiety to avoid any appearance of triumph, had kept the hour of the Commission a secret. The Duke of Sussex did not enter the body of the House, but remained behind the Curtain. When the Assent was given, he said, loud enough to be heard at some distance, "Thank God, the deed is done at last. I care for nothing now. This is the happiest day of my life."

Mr. Courtenay had hardly given the Royal Assent in the usual words, "Le Roi le veult," when a paper was handed up to him with these words:

"Surely it would have been more appropriate to have said 'La Canaille le veult.'" This was indeed the feeling of the majority of the Peers, and of the aristocracy also. Little could the Tories anticipate the day when a warm eulogy of the Statesmen who had passed this very Act should be pronounced by the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, in bringing forward a Reform Bill of a far more democratical character.* 1832. Æt. 50.

There were still the Irish and Scotch Reform Bills, and the Boundary Bill to be passed; and although these were respectively under the charge of Mr. Stanley, Mr. Jeffrey, and Lord John Russell, the responsibility of Lord Althorp, as leader, required his constant attention to them; and the Scotch Bill, as in the preceding Session, was so pertinaciously contested in its details, as almost to exhaust even his patience. It excited, however, little general interest, and on the 27th of June it was read a third time, and the debates on Reform were brought to a conclusion. Irish and Scotch Reform Bills.

The relations of the King with his Ministers in the last days of the Reform Bill had been embittered by the coarse and violent attacks made on him and the Queen in the newspapers supporting the Government. He complained warmly to Lord Althorp of the revolutionary spirit of the day, "which," to use his own words, "had the effect of

* On March 18th, 1867, Mr. Disraeli introduced the Representation of the People Bill into the House of Commons.—Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. clxxxvi., p. 6.—EDITOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

confining the notices of most violent and treasonable attacks levelled at the Sovereign to general expressions of reprobation and of screening from legal punishment those who daily indulged in them"—and he rather sneeringly desired that the Attorney-General should be called upon for an explanation of his grounds for not prosecuting the offenders. This produced the following reply from Lord Althorp:—

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO THE KING.

"Downing Street, *May 23rd*, 1832.

"Viscount Althorp presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Majesty's most gracious letter of this day's date.

"Viscount Althorp begs to assure your Majesty, that no one can feel deeper regret or greater indignation than he does, at the libellous attacks upon your Majesty and upon Her Majesty the Queen which have appeared in the public papers; but he is convinced that your Majesty's servants would ill discharge the duty which they owe to your Majesty, if they allowed these feelings to get the better of their judgment, and were to advise prosecutions, which, while they very probably would not be successful in bringing the offenders to punishment, would inevitably bring your Majesty's name, and that of Her Majesty the Queen, into public discussion before the Courts of Law, in a way which would be most painful to all your Majesty's loyal subjects, and which would be detrimental to the interests of the Monarchy.

"Viscount Althorp has written to the Attorney-General to communicate to him your Majesty's commands; and he hopes and trusts that the explanation which your Majesty requires, will satisfy your Majesty that there is no one more attached to your Majesty's person, or more deter-

mined to uphold the authority of the law, according to the duties of his office, than the Attorney-General. Viscount Althorp's long and intimate acquaintance with this gentleman convinces him that such is the case. 1832. Æt. 50.

"ALTHORP."

The great object of the Parliament being now accomplished, the Ministers determined to finish the Session as soon as possible. It was only from a paramount sense of duty that they brought forward and passed the Irish Compulsory Tithe Composition Bill, a measure which arrested the fall of the Irish Church, but alienated from the Government a large body of their Irish supporters. The angry feeling that this caused among the Liberals, and the factious spirit which seems almost invariably to prevail at the end of a moribund Parliament, encouraged the Opposition to try their fortunes again on the Russian Dutch Loan. Lord Althorp writes to Lord Spencer on the 7th of July, "the enemy intend to make a great attack on Thursday, upon the Treaty with Russia; I think it not impossible they may beat us; if they do, there is only one course for us to take, for if Parliament refuse to do its part in a Treaty* which we have advised the King to ratify, and which the King has so ratified, I think we must resign, and now that the Reform Bill has become law there is no great objection to doing so."

Irish Compulsory Tithe Composition Bill.

The Russian Dutch Loan.

The motion against the payment of the Loan was accordingly made by Mr. Herries on the 12th, and

* This Treaty of 16th November, 1831, greatly strengthened the case of the Ministers.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

ably resisted by Lord Althorp, and the Ministers had the satisfaction of obtaining a majority of 46. Not daunted however by the defeat, Mr. Baring, who I suspect was the author of the movement, returned to the charge four days afterwards on a motion for Papers, when the Ministerial majority was reduced to 36. Lord Althorp on the 17th wrote to Lord Spencer, that he expected a third attack on the following Thursday, when he adds, "I think they will fail, but we are in a very tottering state, and it is very possible that they will still run into us before the end of the Session. As for me, I do not much care, or rather I shall be very well pleased if they do, nor do I think our continuance in office, now we have passed the Reform Bill, is of much importance to anybody." This time, however, the Ministers had a signal triumph, their majority being raised to 79.

The King communicated to Lord Althorp his strong disapprobation of these proceedings of the Tories.

The Budget.

This was the last party fight of the Session. Lord Althorp in the following week made his financial statement, the lateness of which could only be excused by the pressure of the Reform Bill and the unimportant character of the proposed Budget, for it was in fact merely in the nature of a continuance Bill, no alteration being made in the existing duties. The statement was favourably received, and in clearness and candour was not open to objection. The public, however, could hardly have been pre-

pared for his announcement that the surplus of three millions left by the Tory Ministers in the Exchequer had been already exhausted, whilst a deficit of more than 300,000*l.* appeared in its place. But no imputation could be raised against Lord Althorp of extravagance or mismanagement, and the House, including even Sir Robert Peel, acquiesced in his cheerful views of the financial prospects of the country. The Budget accordingly was accepted, and the supplies voted almost without opposition. 1832. Æt. 50.

On the 14th of August Parliament was prorogued, on the understanding that the Dissolution would not take place till late in the year. Dissolution of Parliament.

## CHAPTER XXI.

THE GENERAL ELECTION.—MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.—RADICAL OPPOSITION.—MINISTERIAL MEASURES.

1832. Æt. 50.

Lord Althorp re-elected for Northamptonshire.

The Parliamentary Recess gave less relief to the Ministers than usual, owing to the necessary preparations for the General Election. Lord Althorp was one of those, who, notwithstanding popularity and public services, had reason to expect a severe contest. He writes to Lord Spencer from Northampton on the 4th Sept., "I think that my seat may be secured, whether (Lord) Euston perseveres or not, but it will cost more than it is worth, and I have decided that if it is probable that the expense will exceed 1,000*l.* I will take to the Tower Hamlets. That is to say, if it appears that it will be necessary to pay for bringing up the voters to the poll, I will not undertake it. I consider that if I do resign I can never show my face here again, but that is an evil which must be submitted to—one is not compelled to go to an absurd expense, because some wrong-headed people choose it and insist upon dragging me into it against all reason and common sense."

A few days afterwards, Lord Euston, finding that his continuance in the field would endanger Lord

Althorp's return, generously retired; and it was then understood that Lord Althorp and Sir Charles Knightley would be returned without opposition. 1832. Æt. 50.

It was during the most gloomy state of Lord Althorp's prospects in Northamptonshire that he had received an invitation to stand for the Tower Hamlets, free of all expense. Success was certain, and no canvass required. He sent at once to Dr. Lushington, whom he asked to be his colleague. That eminent lawyer at first observed that he had received an invitation from Bath, signed by the leading electors of all shades of politics; but, notwithstanding this, on perceiving that Lord Althorp wished it, he yielded; indeed, he said to me, "I could not refuse—there was something about Lord Althorp that absolutely bewitched me."

I rejoice to add that Dr. Lushington was triumphantly returned for the Tower Hamlets, and retained the seat after his elevation to the Bench until disqualified many years later by an Act of Parliament introduced for the purpose of regulating his office.*

Lord Althorp could obtain only a brief respite from the cares of office, for he was less than three weeks at Wiseton, hardly long enough, as he observed, to become acquainted with his cattle. He had the pleasure, however, during this time, of

* I am afraid that this disqualification, which was the work of Sir James Graham, must be ascribed to mere party motives. Dr. Lushington's great knowledge of international law, besides his other merits, enabled him to be a most useful member, and his loss has never been supplied in my day.—AUTHOR.

1832. Æt. 50.

a visit from the Duke of Richmond and Sir James Graham, two of his most intimate friends in the Cabinet, and, like himself, much addicted to agricultural pursuits. The Duke did not pretend to any superior knowledge of stock, but he was celebrated for the breed of sheep which he had made the pride of the Sussex downs. Sir James Graham was more eminent for his knowledge of rural economy; and in the management of his large estate, forming part of Solway Moss, only of late years brought into cultivation, he had been eminently successful, as was seen in his prosperous tenantry and their well cultivated farms.

With these companions, and I can say from experience that few could have been found more agreeable, Lord Althorp appears to have thoroughly enjoyed himself. They accompanied him, he writes to Lord Spencer, to Doncaster Races, and he adds, "We have been very lucky in our weather. I have had a good week's exercise, which has done me good. I rode to Doncaster and back four days, which makes 100 miles, and went out shooting the intervening day of the five. I never remember so bad a year for partridges here. I shot tolerably well, but have walked very badly and have not been able to go out two days together. My constituents at Peterborough have sent me a snuff-box as a parting gift. It was bought by a shilling subscription. It is in very good taste, but it is too small for me. We have very good accounts of the elections everywhere, and I think everything seems to

be working well except the Belgian business, and that will soon end, I think. The finance works brilliantly, and I now feel confident that I shall make a good balance sheet at the end of the year." 1832. Æt. 50.

On the 1st of October the Cabinet meetings began. "From what I see," wrote Lord Althorp, "we have been all of us absent from town too long a time together, but I hope no great harm has been done, though some things may have been delayed, which ought not." This probably alludes to Ireland, the state of which seems to have engaged the immediate attention of the Ministers, and well it might; a more difficult or more disheartening subject perhaps scarcely ever called for the action of a Ministry. The necessity for early legislation was unanimously admitted, and Mr. Stanley propounded the heads of a Peace Preservation Act and a Church Temporalities Act, the former as a measure of coercion, and the latter as one of relief; but in neither could Lord Althorp acquiesce, for he considered one went too far, and the other not far enough —an opinion which was shared by some of his colleagues, and led to discussions so hot as to foreshadow the breaking up of the Government, an event that took place less than two years afterwards. It appears from the following letter that Lord Althorp was only kept from resigning by the earnest entreaties of Lord Grey.

Cabinet meetings.

Difficulties in Ireland.

1832.
Æt. 50.

EARL GREY TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"EAST SHEEN, *October 21st*, 1832.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"I received your letter yesterday evening. To say that it gave me great pain would be little: and after a sleepless night my mind is overpowered with the thought of all the evils to ourselves, to the country, and to the peace of Europe, which the breaking up at this moment, and upon such a question, of the present administration would occasion. To myself individually, retirement from office would be, as I have no doubt it would be to you, a relief, and not a misfortune; with respect to me the time is fast approaching when I must retire, whatever may be the situation of affairs. But I feel bound not to do so, when the consequence would be to destroy the Whig Party for ever, to give power, in the first instance, to those whose principles we have always opposed, and eventually, perhaps, for such a Government could not last, to produce a subversion of the Government itself. With such a prospect before me, I will bear much, I will suffer much whilst a choice is left me. But that choice I shall no longer have, if you resign. There is nothing for me then, but to abandon the Government to those who may be willing to take it.

"Having said this much, I really feel it difficult to enter into a discussion by letter on the subject which has given birth to these difficulties. When there exists, as there does between us, mutual confidence and affection, and a general, if not an entire agreement of views and principles, undisturbed by any personal interests, such matters are always best treated of in personal communications; I shall therefore reserve the greater part of what I have to say till to-morrow, when I will be in town about twelve, and shall hope to see you, &c., &c.

"GREY."

1832. Æt. 50.

The objections raised by Lord Althorp were partly removed by some modifications in both Bills. He yielded most reluctantly to the stringent clauses in the Peace Preservation Act, and only on satisfactory evidence that Ireland had fallen into a state which had no parallel in any European country.

Parliament was dissolved on the 3rd of December. The Ministers had been led to expect from the reports of their friends that the returns would give them a very large majority.

That there were reasonable grounds for this expectation may be collected from the following letter of Lord Morpeth's, which made a great impression upon Lord Grey :—

VISCOUNT MORPETH TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"26 *Dec.*, 1832.

"As I have just finished an extensive canvass of the largest constituent body in the empire,* and in the progress of it have undergone several courses of interrogation, as well as heard much expression of opinion, it has struck me that it might not be altogether useless if I were to put down upon paper my general impression of the present state of public feeling, as it has come under my notice.

"Of Toryism I saw and heard nothing, and in large manufacturing districts it is entirely powerless. Of Radicalism I found infinitely less than I had expected. I am aware that this is in part to be attributed to employment being now tolerably plentiful, and trade healthy, though not brilliant; distress would soon call into play a large floating mass of discontent. Still, I believe the great bulk of the population to be sound and reasonable. Several political unions attempted a demonstration against me, exclusively

* The West Riding of Yorkshire.

1832. Æt. 50.

of my colleague Mr. Strickland, on the grounds of my birth and my not being supposed to carry some liberal opinions so far, but they only proved that they could do absolutely nothing; they embrace but an inconsiderable number of persons, and I think are viewed with jealousy by those who do not belong to them.

"The general feeling is very keen in favour of a full measure of Church Reform, but I do not think there is any prevalent wish to destroy the Establishment. I feel sure that it is most essential to the welfare of the Church to take advantage of these dispositions by a large and decided measure of Conservative Reform. Church Rates are the great rock of offence, I should say, more than tithes; but then I speak of a manufacturing district community. The power of the Bishops is not viewed with favour; cheap bread, more corn, a fixed duty of very moderate amount—but these are battles which we manufacturers must fight for ourselves.

"We shall win in time. Economy and reduction of taxation speak for themselves. Malt and soap are mentioned most often. I need not say how deep the feeling is respecting Slavery.* I think the Radicals care about it least. It strikes me that the non-electors have begun to find that the Ballot would be fatal to their influence over electors, and are consequently cooled about it. The electors in the Cloth-hall, at Leeds, have observed that the suffrage at present descends low enough.

"MORPETH."

It may be observed that nothing is said in this letter of the state of Ireland. In fact, the English constituencies generally showed little sympathy with Irish grievances, and they detested the Catholics. Mr. Macaulay told me that even such a small boon

* Lord Halifax told me that Mr. Brougham owed his return for Yorkshire entirely to his services against Slavery.—AUTHOR.

as providing glebe-houses for the priests in Ireland could not have been advocated at Leeds, without losing him his seat. 1832. Æt. 50.

The election returns gave a very large majority to the Liberals; but in the Metropolitan constituencies, such as Finsbury, Marylebone and Lambeth, the Radicals were preferred to the Whigs, owing, it was believed, to the superior organisation of the former, under the management of the Political Unions. In the counties the Tories recovered many of their seats. Lord Althorp thought himself very fortunate in remaining member for Northamptonshire.* Majority for the Liberals.

The Irish returns were far more favourable to O'Connell than to the Ministers. The Whig interest which had long prevailed in the Liberal constituencies was reported to be almost extinguished, and it cannot be said to have since revived.

The House met on the 29th of January for the election of a Speaker. The Ministers felt some anxiety about the debut of the new members, who were estimated at above three hundred in number. No serious opposition had been expected to the choice of Mr. Manners Sutton, whose acknowledged popularity and tact, as well as his long experience, pointed him out as the member best qualified to preside over a House elected under a new constitu- Mr. Manners Sutton chosen Speaker.

* The election was watched with the deepest interest by foreign politicians; Mr. Haldimand—one of the leading merchants in London—told me that his Paris correspondents had desired him to send them the earliest intelligence of the Return: for they considered the peace of Europe to depend on the Election.—AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51.

tion.* Mr. Hume, under the pretence that the Speaker ought to represent the political opinions of the majority, but chiefly I suspect to test the strength of the Radical party, proposed Mr. Littleton, and in a tone and manner that showed his determination to be a great party leader. Instead of allowing the Ministerialists, according to custom, the precedence in proposing their candidate, he rose immediately on the return of the members from the House of Lords, and in a very dull speech proposed Mr. Littleton, much against the will of the latter.

Lord Morpeth and Sir Francis Burdett moved and seconded the nomination of Mr. Manners Sutton. Cobbett's speech in opposition was an utter failure. It did not obtain a single cheer. Lord Althorp spoke very well in support of Mr. M. Sutton, who was elected by a large majority, the numbers being—

| | |
|---|---|
| Ayes . . . . . | 241 |
| Noes . . . . . | 31 |
| Majority . . . | 210 |

The House presented a singular appearance on this occasion. Cobbett placed himself on the Trea-

* The preference given to Mr. Manners Sutton was a great disappointment to Mr. Abercromby, with whom the Speakership had long been an object of ambition. His claims could hardly have been resisted, if he had remained in Parliament until the vacancy of the Chair. But Lord Grey and Lord Althorp both doubted whether he had the temper and tact to deal with a House so unlike what he had been accustomed to; and this was the general impression. In ability, constitutional knowledge, and even the practice of Parliament, he was undoubtedly very superior to Mr. Manners Sutton.—AUTHOR.

sury Bench, next to Sir James Graham; a few days afterwards he took his seat among the Opposition next to Sir Robert Peel, much to the annoyance of the latter, and this he persisted in doing for several nights. 1833. Æt. 51.

An old politician being asked by one of the Ministers what he thought of the new Parliament, replied, "It is full twenty years older than any that has preceded it. The members will vote less from party motives. They will require to be convinced before they vote. They will also be very severe upon all abuses, and be more angry with a sinecure than with a grave financial error." *

Debates on the state of Ireland.

The first month of the Session was almost entirely occupied by a succession of debates on the state of Ireland, which alone were sufficient, in Lord Althorp's opinion, to disgust anyone with politics. Whilst his conviction of the reality of the grievances of the Irish remained unchanged, the prospect of any redress, by the adoption of a liberal and enlightened policy, became more remote than ever. The Ministerial measures for the relief of the Catholics were, under various pretexts, depreciated and frustrated by the new leaders of the Catholic party in the House, who threw off the former connection of their party with the Whigs, and looked to agitation, in its most odious forms, as the surest means of obtaining ascendency in the Government

* This is a transcript from my Journal; the entry was made at the time.—AUTHOR.

1833. Æ T. 51

of the country.* They were, with few exceptions, men of small means and humble connections, who seemed quite misplaced in such an assembly as the House of Commons.

The amendments were defeated by overwhelming majorities.

Mr. Stanley, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, being also a member of the Cabinet, was the great authority with Earl Grey on Irish affairs, and with reason, for besides his brilliant abilities, he had the best means of information, and was thoroughly honest and straightforward. It is said that he never understood the Irish character, and he certainly looked most at the worst side of it. Perhaps he did not make sufficient allowance for the effects of long misgovernment on the people. This, at least, might be inferred from the Irish Church Bill,† and the Peace Preservation or Coercion Bill, which originated with him, and were prepared in his Department. Neither, as has been previously stated, entirely satisfied Lord Althorp, though, in

* It is well known that the landed proprietors and gentry among the Catholics did not generally hold these opinions. Unfortunately the narrow policy of the English Government since the Revolution of 1688 had reduced them to comparative insignificance. Excluded from the learned professions, from military service, from Parliament, and even from the magistracy, they lost nearly all incentives to intellectual exertion, and gradually ceased to be much regarded by the humbler classes of their own persuasion. The political power properly belonging to their station thus fell into the hands of the priests, who were too ready to combine with Mr. O'Connell in drawing their flocks into an attempt to overthrow a system of which they had a just right to complain.—AUTHOR.

† It was only after much controversy that his consent could be obtained to some of the liberal clauses of the Bill.—AUTHOR.

compliance with the wishes of Earl Grey, he consented to bring them before Parliament. 1833. Æt. 51.

Irish Church Bill.

The first question with which he had to deal was the Irish Church—"Fons et origo mali." There was a general belief that the attempt would be a failure. The Catholics were sure, it was said, to be hostile. O'Connell had just made a violent speech of two hours for the repeal of the Union. Even the Whigs could not be depended on. So alarmed had they become at the condition of Ireland, that an intimation was given to Lord Althorp, that, unless the proposed reform was a very liberal measure, they could not bring themselves to support a Coercion Bill.

How far the Reform came up to this description must not be judged by the final result. After the lapse of forty years, it may now be forgotten that the first reception of the Irish Church Bill was in the highest degree satisfactory to the Ministers. Lord Althorp was heard throughout his speech with frequent marks of approval, and he sat down amidst loud cheers, amongst which he distinguished the voice of Mr. O'Connell. This so delighted him, that he could not refrain from saying, looking at the same time at Mr. O'Connell, "I confess this cheer gives me great pleasure." Indeed, Mr. O'Connell praised the Bill warmly, both in public and in private, as I can vouch for, having, in the course of the night, heard him in the lobby express himself unequivocally to that effect. He spoke with confidence of the happy change that might be expected

1833. Æt. 51.

from it in Ireland; and there was a heartiness in his praise that made it very difficult to distrust him. The only explanation I can offer is, that he regarded the Bill as the first step towards the disestablishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland.

The Irish Protestants and the High Tories were the only persons who raised their voices against the Bill.

The success of the Bill out of the House was equal to that it obtained within. A Westminster meeting, which had been organised by the Radicals for the purpose of annoying the Government, proved a total failure. Mr. Hume, and some of his friends representing popular places, found their influence over their constituents on the wane.*

It has been said by some over-sanguine politicians, that if the Government had followed up the Irish Church Bill by measures of the same or a bolder character, involving an entire change of policy, there would have been no necessity for a Coercion Bill. The experiment, however, could be tried only in an absolute monarchy, as it was in utter defiance of the opinions of the people, both in England and Scotland. Nor was the result of the concessions already made to the Catholics very

* Mr. John Wood, then M.P. for Preston, passed through Wakefield during this week, on his way to London, and found, Radicals as were the majority of the electors, that they were so dissatisfied with Mr. Gaskell (their member), for the support he had given to Hume and O'Connell, that Mr. Wood was informed that his interest there was entirely destroyed. He certainly lost his seat at the next election.—AUTHOR.

encouraging. Some time of preparation must at best have been allowed for any important change, and, in the meanwhile, the interference of legislation for the securing of human life and of property was no less a duty than a necessity. 1833. Æt. 51.

A catalogue of the atrocities committed in the year 1832, in the Province of Leinster,* would alone be an ample justification of the Peace Preservation (or Coercion) Act. The restrictions imposed by it on the right of petitioning, and of holding public meetings, still more the substitution of courts martial for the ordinary tribunals, were felt by Lord Althorp to be absolutely necessary under the circumstances, yet so repugnant to his notions of constitutional government, that he adopted them with extreme reluctance. This feeling he betrayed in his speech on the First Reading of the Bill, which it must be confessed satisfied neither himself nor the House.† Sir James Graham, in great alarm lest the case of the Ministers should go before the public next morning on this speech, sent me to Lord Grey to suggest Mr. Stanley's speaking before the debate closed, which he did about midnight,‡ with an eloquence and effect that excited universal admiration.§ Irish Coercion Bill.

* Murders and attempts to murder, 163; robberies, 387; burglaries, 182; burnings, 194; houghing of cattle, 70; other malicious and wilful injuries to property, 407; serious assaults, 744; illegal notices, 913.—AUTHOR.

† Mr. Abercromby observed to me, that it required a practised lawyer to handle such a case. Mr. Sheil agreed, saying, "I think Lord Plunket would have done it best." This was before Mr. Stanley's speech.—AUTHOR.

‡ Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. xv., p. 186.

§ Mr. Abercromby said to me, "had it been the old House, I should

1833. Æt. 51.

The new members, many of whom had never heard public speaking of a high order before, were in raptures, and, as was observed to me, would have come to any resolution against Mr. O'Connell that might have been proposed to them. Mr. Bonham Carter told me that he had never seen the House in such a state of excitement. Mr. O'Connell looked like a convicted felon. His speech at the conclusion of the debate made no impression. The Duke of Cumberland, however, sitting under the gallery listened to it, I observed, with great attention, saying at last, "It was a capital speech: he gave it the Ministers soundly."

The Ministers had an immense majority, and Mr. Stanley's speech continued the theme of general admiration, though it was said to be too much the speech of a partisan, and would not contribute to the pacification of Ireland.

Lord Althorp always looked back to this period of his official career with pain, and I gladly turn to view him in his position of Chancellor of the Exchequer, the duties of which engrossed his time to such a degree, as to make Irish politics absolutely odious to him. It was, indeed, a period of unusual labour for the Minister of Finance—an amount of business had sprung up during the progress of the Reform Bill, such as the Bank and East India Charters,

have quietly walked home and put on my nightcap, under the conviction that Stanley would in a few weeks be Prime Minister, and remain so as long as he pleased, governing us on Tory principles, for the whole speech was in that spirit.—AUTHOR.

which admitted of no delay; and many other questions, some of a financial character, in the hands of private members, were not less perplexing, nor did they throw less responsibility on him.* 1833. Æt. 51.

Sinecure Abolition Bill.

Of the latter, one of the most troublesome was Mr. Hume's proposal, on the 14th of February, for the Abolition of Naval and Military Sinecure appointments: the obvious precursor of an attack on all sinecures, and, therefore, most unpalatable to the King, as well as to a large proportion of both Whigs and Tories.† The Whigs had connived at the cry being raised during the Reform Bill, but were not yet prepared to act upon it. The Radicals, eager to outstrip them in popularity, now took the question out of their hands. Lord Althorp would have consented to some restriction being put on a privilege which had been grossly abused, and, in an unreformed Parliament, this compromise would have been readily accepted. He pointed out, with justice, the objection to thus interfering with the Royal Prerogative in the distribution of patronage, when this could be legitimately done in the Committee of Supply; the distinction, however, had no weight with the new members. They sided with the

* It will be seen in Hansard that the Radical members brought forward many questions, such as the Ballot, Flogging in the Army and Navy, which Lord Althorp was obliged to oppose.—AUTHOR.

† The feeling of the House against sinecures seems to have been of modern date. Earl Waldegrave, in the days of George II., would not deign to accept a pension, but was grateful for a sinecure. ("Earl Waldegrave's Autobiography.") I may add, that Mr. Pitt's appointment to the sinecure Wardenship of the Cinque Ports was a most popular measure.—AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51. Radicals, and Lord Althorp, after an animated debate, was obliged to take refuge in the previous question, and even this he only carried by a narrow majority, several of his friends voting against him. The Tories, generally, left the House without voting, which the Whigs thought very unhandsome, as it was solely owing to the names they had placed on the list that public censure had attached to it. The triumph of the Radicals was complete, for Lord Althorp not only found himself obliged to adopt Mr. Hume's Resolution, but was unable to resist a motion of Mr. Whittle Harvey's for a return of all persons on the Pension Lists, and, what was still worse, of the grounds on which their pensions had been granted. A private assurance that nothing would follow to cause pain to the existing Pensioners, gave them little comfort.

The next movement from the Radical Benches was a repetition of the attempt made in 1829, to obtain a depreciation of the Currency. It had then, after a severe contest of four nights, been defeated by Sir Robert Peel, with the assistance of Lord Althorp, who now found himself obliged to fight the same battle under far less favourable circumstances. The various political Unions, flushed with success in the Reform agitation, exerted all their strength to carry their point against the Ministry. Great meetings were held at Birmingham, Manchester, and other manufacturing towns, in concert with an Association in London, called the Currency Club, which issued pamphlets and manifestoes in pro-

fusion, and so far succeeded as to create considerable alarm in the City. They also appear to have made some converts among the new members; but the Resolution moved by Mr. Attwood,* the Chairman of the Birmingham Union, was signally defeated in the House, and the whole tone of the debate, in which Lord Althorp took a prominent part, was considered to have given a degree of confidence to the industrious and productive classes of the community which no other event could have inspired. 1833. Æt. 51.

The financial statement of the Session made by Lord Althorp, on the 19th of April, evinced his increased proficiency in the duties of his office. As he had never before had an opportunity of stating what progress had been made in redeeming the pledge of economy on which the Administration had taken office, he showed that the number of places they had abolished was 1,387; the salaries done away with being above 230,000*l.*; whilst the reduction of expenditure in 1831, 1832, and 1833, was altogether about three millions. The Estimates for the year he placed at nearly three millions less than the average of the three years of the preceding Government—a fact more deserving of consideration from the creditable economy practised by that Govern- The Budget.

* Mr. Attwood's speech was a failure, nor did he afterwards make any figure in the House. His *forte* lay in outdoor agitation. After a manner he had much natural eloquence. His success at Birmingham almost turned his brain, for he actually believed that in six months he should be Chancellor of the Exchequer and revolutionise the currency.—AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51.

ment, one of whose members had frankly observed, "We have reaped the harvest of reduction, and left only the gleanings to our successors." Lord Althorp was thus able to announce that after the liquidation of the deficit in the preceding year, a surplus of more than 1,500,000*l.* remained applicable to the diminution of taxation. The taxes he proposed to reduce were those which he considered as pressing most injuriously on the industry of the country; such as the tax on Soap, 592,000*l.*; the duties on Marine Insurances, and Advertisements, and several Assessed Taxes, making altogether a reduction of above 1,349,000*l.*

There still remained a surplus of 500,000*l.*, which he proposed to leave in the Exchequer. Neither Lord Althorp's statement nor his proposals met with any hostile criticism. Mr. Hume, indeed, treated the reduction as still below what he deemed necessary, and, at the same time, protested against the high amount of the surplus. Sir Robert Peel, on the other hand, said that the reductions had been carried too far, and contended for a larger surplus; but to the general principles of Finance laid down by Lord Althorp, he gave his ready assent. His authority seemed to carry the concurrence of his party, so that in the general estimation of the House, Lord Althorp might well be considered to have retrieved the defeat of 1831.*

* It is due to Lord Althorp to notice the improvement made by him in keeping the public accounts. "I give the Ministers," said Mr. Hume, "every credit for laying open to inquiry every branch of

1833. Æt. 51.

Amendments to the Budget

One feature of the Budget, which, in the opinion of moderate men, did honour to Lord Althorp, was its impartiality. Great pressure had been put on him by members in the landed interest for a repeal of the Malt duty, and not less, by the representatives of large towns for the repeal of the House and Window duties. He was too sagacious to doubt that his preference for the welfare of the community at large to the favour of these powerful interests would cost him dear. Indeed within a few days hostile notices, one against the Malt duty, and the other against the Assessed Taxes, were given from opposite quarters. The first, for a reduction of the Malt duty from twenty shillings to ten shillings a quarter, was treated by the Ministers as of little importance, originating as it did in a coalition between members of different politics, and unsanctioned by Sir Robert Peel. It was moved on the 26th of April, by Sir William Ingilby, a Whig Baronet of considerable property in Lincolnshire, but of no other distinction. Lord Althorp opposed him in a stout and sensible speech. A languid debate followed, some of the Cabinet Ministers being absent, under the impression that the motion would not come on; and many of the Ministerialists having from time to time dropped away, owing to the negligence of the Treasury Whip. Thus the division came on unexpectedly, and, to the general surprise,

The Malt duty.

The Assessed taxes.

expenditure; and there is now no department into which members of the House cannot inquire, and no accounts connected with the Finance of the country have been refused by the noble Lord."—AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51.

the motion was carried by a majority of 10, the Radicals having joined the Agriculturists, on the principle of being always for a reduction of taxation.

Lord Grey was exceedingly angry at this humiliating defeat. He said, that if his friends would not take the trouble of waiting a few hours in the House to carry his measures, they had no right to expect him to sacrifice all his comforts by remaining in office. He expressed himself so strongly to this effect, that the King took fright, and urged him strongly not to act in a manner so injurious to the public interest. It would indeed have been very difficult to replace him at this time, especially as Lord Althorp would have gladly availed himself of an excuse for following his example.*

If fortune frowned on the Ministers by subjecting them to an undeserved defeat, it assisted them in turning the event to their advantage. Instead of obtaining a simple Resolution to rescind this unfortunate vote, a course always humiliating to the House, Lord Althorp availed himself of the Rules of Parliament to bring the question indirectly again under consideration, on the motion of Sir John Key against the Assessed Taxes. He argued, that the repeal of *either* impost alone, would be a most partial

* It added to the mortification of Lord Grey and Lord Althorp, to find many of their personal friends giving them cold support on this occasion. Sir John Wrottesley especially urged the necessity of abandoning the Malt duty, after the vote thus given against it. The Treasury Whips reported to Lord Althorp the readiness of the agricultural members to escape before the Division.—AUTHOR.

preference of the interests thus favoured, and that the repeal of *both* would be incompatible with the maintenance of the public credit. He thus contrived to couple the two hostile proposals in the same amendment, which was to the effect that the deficiency in the Revenue occasioned by the reduction of the tax on Malt to ten shillings a quarter, and by the repeal of the tax on Houses and Windows, could only be supplied by the substitution of a general tax on Property and Income, and an extensive change in our whole financial system, which, at present, would be inexpedient. 1833. Æt. 51.

Lord Althorp was well received generally, and he at once saw from the crowded state of the House, that he had no reason to fear a repetition of the accident on the preceding Friday. Many of his Radical allies however at first talked in their usual style of their indifference to party, and of the little distinction there was between Whigs and Tories, so that Mr. Warburton * said to me, "I wonder whether those gentlemen intend to support a Government at all? If the people will not submit to be ruled by the Whigs, is it to be supposed that they will be obedient to the Tories?" This feeling gradually strengthened, even among the Radicals themselves, during the debate. None of the Ministers would speak except Lord Althorp. He seemed to take all on himself. Sir James Graham had prepared a speech, but when the time came he

* One of the most eminent members of the Radical party. — AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51.

had not the courage to make it. Mr. Spring Rice in some measure supplied his place, and gave such general satisfaction as to be marked for Lord Althorp's successor.

The Ministers prevailed by a majority of 355 against 157.

The following letter addressed by the King to Lord Althorp on the occasion, does His Majesty credit, and was, I believe, perfectly sincere.

"ST. JAMES'S PALACE, *May 1st*, 1833.

"The King has received Viscount Althorp's Report of the divisions in the House of Commons last night, and His Majesty congratulates him and the other members of his Government upon this satisfactory manifestation of a return to its senses of the better parts of the House. This has, however, been a *very serious slip*, and His Majesty earnestly entreats his confidential servants not to suffer their reliance on a Reformed House of Commons to exclude the vigilance which appears so indispensable towards obviating the occurrence of the greatest embarrassment and difficulty from its occasional inconsistency, and from the deference of some of its members to popular clamour, and the manner in which some even of those who have accepted office have pledged themselves upon questions necessarily affecting the leading interests of the country, and the stability of any government.

"WILLIAM R."

Their success was far from giving the Ministers unmixed pleasure. They were too much indebted for it to their enemies; and it only increased the discontent of their friends out of doors. Meetings were at once announced in London and the large

towns for devising means of repealing the Assessed Taxes, in which the Liberals took the leading part, violent Resolutions of censure being also passed against the Ministers. Lord Althorp was condemned to receive deputation after deputation of angry tradesmen, entreating him to retrace his steps; and every member of the Government was more or less harassed by similar solicitations. The excitement rose to such a pitch, that one of the police was actually murdered in the attempt to prevent a large open-air public meeting, and the jury returned a verdict of justifiable homicide ! !

1833. Æt. 51.

In the midst of this agitation, Sir John Cam Hobhouse, the new Secretary for Ireland, resigned his office and his seat for Westminster. He had, it seems, himself repeatedly declared that the House and Window taxes ought to be repealed; but other members, who had made the same declaration, did not follow his example; nor did he, at first, consider himself bound to take such a step. Indeed, on the preceding Sunday, in a long conversation we had together, he treated all resignations on account of the vote as most unnecessary and inexpedient. His retirement added greatly to the difficulties of the Ministry, which he increased by standing again on the vacancy he had made, and being defeated by Colonel De Lacy Evans.* †

Resignation of Sir John Cam Hobhouse.

* Afterwards General Sir De Lacy Evans, G.C.B. He served with credit in Spain as Commander-in-Chief of the British Legion during the Carlist war; he subsequently commanded a division in the Crimea. —Editor.

† Sir John Hobhouse was perhaps more to be pitied than blamed

1833. Æt. 51.

Lord Althorp was more alive to these demonstrations of popular feeling from the fact of their proceeding in many instances from persons who had previously regarded him with the warmest admiration; such as the leading Liberals in the new Borough of the Tower Hamlets, whose generous and disinterested offers to return him, when in danger of rejection in Northamptonshire, he always remembered with gratitude and pride. He was, however, too well satisfied of the grounds on which he acted to depart from his determination. His firmness was appreciated by the public generally, so that the opposition to his proposals gradually languished; and the last hostile motion against him fell into the

in this affair. He had determined, on the acceptance of his resignation, to withdraw for a time from public life. The following day he went down to his brother Edward's, in the country, and he was congratulating himself on being again a free man, and able to resume his literary pursuits, when a deputation arrived from Westminster, who represented to him that the Liberal interest in the Borough must fall unless he consented to be re-elected. They treated his return as a matter of course. He reluctantly yielded, but declared himself determined neither to spend money nor to canvass. Had the Tories not started a candidate he would have had no trouble, but they could not resist the temptation of embarrassing the Ministers, and put forward Mr. B. Escott, who took off the votes of many moderate men, and thus gave the victory to Colonel Evans. Sir John owed his influence at Westminster mainly to Sir Francis Burdett. His manners were not popular, nor was he a ready speaker, and still less a demagogue. His merit lay in being an honest and resolute Liberal—with the accomplishments of a scholar and a gentleman. He was a favourite with the Tories. The Duke of Wellington had offered him, through Sir Henry Hardinge, a high post *near* the Cabinet, which he wisely declined. Lord Rosslyn and Mr. Calcraft, both stout Liberals, were less scrupulous, and had reason to regret their compliance. Sir John Hobhouse was now talked of as ambassador to Madrid, but it went off.—AUTHOR.

hands of an obscure Radical, and was defeated by an overwhelming majority. 1833. Æt. 51.

The renewal of the Charters to the East India Company and to the Bank of England had been noticed in the King's Speech, and were the questions that excited most interest in the commercial classes, I shall not dwell on the former, as Lord Althorp left the charge of it in the hands of Mr. Charles Grant, the President of the Board of Control, by whom the negotiations with the Court of Directors were conducted and brought to a successful issue. · It is however only justice to add, that the Committees on Indian affairs in the preceding Session, whose labours formed the basis of subsequent legislation, and will long remain as most valuable materials of information to all inquirers into the state of India, were organised by Mr. Hyde Villiers,* with the assistance of Lord Althorp. He was a young man of great promise, and his indefatigable industry and clear understanding, set off, as they were, by a most pleasing address, and considerable powers of speaking, The Bank and East India Company charters.

* Mr. Hyde Villiers was a younger brother of the late Lord Clarendon, with whom he had been brought up at Cambridge. I recollect them as two of the best-looking young men in the University. He early took up Liberal opinions, especially on all social subjects. Thus he warmly advocated a Reform of the Poor Laws, and assisted the preliminary inquiries made by the Government with a view to legislation on the subject. Political Economy was one of his favourite studies, as he showed in his motion on the renewal of the Methuen Treaty with Portugal—the mistaken policy of which he most ably exposed. The borough he represented having been disfranchised by the Reform Bill, he went down to Cornwall, in the hope of being returned for one of the new Constituencies ; and while thus engaged he was seized by a fever during his canvass, and carried off after a short illness, at the house of his friend, Sir Charles Lemon.—AUTHOR.

1833. Æt. 51.

had already marked him for political eminence, when he was carried off by a fever at the close of the Session. Mr. Grant made a very fine speech in proposing the Resolutions for the Charter; and the measure was carried, with only slight modifications, to the general satisfaction of the country.

The Bank Charter had taken up much of Lord Althorp's attention during the preceding Session. He had prudently obtained a Committee of the House to report on the expediency of renewing the exclusive privileges of the Bank, and although the Committee continued its labours from the end of May till the end of the Session, without being able to agree in making a Report, the evidence yielded much valuable information. It assisted him in arriving at the conclusion, that the renewal of the Charter was essential as a necessary protection to the public against fluctuations in the amount of Paper Currency.*

The terms on which the Charter should be renewed formed the subject of a long negotiation between Lord Althorp and Mr. Horsley Palmer, the Governor of the Bank, in which Mr. Palmer was not less impressed by his knowledge of banking matters than by his frankness and honesty. Indeed he continued ever afterwards personally attached to him, though of an opposite creed in politics.

* Section on the Bank Charter in the pamphlet, "The Reform Ministry and the Reformed Parliament," p. 36. This section was written by Lord Althorp, who also had the kindness to revise other parts of the book.—AUTHOR.

On the 1st of June, Lord Althorp moved his Reso- 1833.
lutions for the Bill, in a very clear and able speech, in Æt. 51.
which he entered into many details illustrative of the principles of his measure,—most were sanctioned by the highest authorities, and are now admitted as truths.

On one of the provisions of the Bill, the establishment of Bank-notes as a legal tender, he was opposed by Sir Robert Peel, from the fear with which he was inspired of this producing a depreciation of the currency; and very plausible grounds were adduced in support of the opposition. Experience however has proved them to be groundless; and Lord Althorp's views were adopted. The bargain proposed with the Bank met with some censure as too favourable to that establishment, but was carried without a division. Certain restrictions sought to be imposed on Joint Stock Banks were opposed so strenuously by the country bankers, that Lord Althorp, rather than delay the passing of the Bill, consented to postpone the further consideration of that part of the measure to another Session. In the meanwhile, it was a matter of rejoicing among men of business that the differences between the Bank and the Government should be brought to a successful termination, and that the principles on which a sound and safe system of paper circulation might be conducted, had been distinctly recognised and confirmed by Parliament.

It has been repeatedly stated, that great discon- The P
tent was produced through the country by the cipe
Bil

1833. Æt. 51.

omission of the subject of Slavery in the King's Speech on the opening of the Session. Lord Althorp had previously urged Earl Grey to include an Emancipation Bill among those necessary to be submitted to Parliament. Lord Grey replied, that more already had been undertaken than any Government was likely to carry; and also that the King was well known to be disinclined to any proposal of the kind, and would probably object to it. The warm expostulations of Mr. Fowell Buxton and other philanthropists soon opened Lord Grey's eyes, and he laid his difficulties before the King, who behaved much better than was expected. His Majesty yielded to necessity; but Mr. Ellice told me that he was influenced, partly by the belief inculcated on him by Mr. E., that the difficulties of such legislation as the Ministry could propose were insuperable. This probably was true, so long as Lord Goderich, a statesman of an easy and irresolute temperament, remained at the Colonial Office; but the appointment of Mr. Stanley in his place soon altered the aspect of affairs. He took the whole question into his own hands, broke up the party in the office who had ruled Lord Goderich, and without their intervention prepared a measure to be laid before the Cabinet. It satisfied neither his colleagues, nor a meeting of the friends of the Government, to which it was submitted. Lord Althorp was one of the dissentients, I believe, on the ground that the compensation proposed to be given to the planters far exceeded any reasonable estimate of their claims.

Such was the difference of opinion, that the Ministry was on the very point of dissolution. However at last the measure, with various modifications, was adopted, and Mr. Stanley had the honour of laying it before Parliament, which he did with his usual ability. 1833. Æt. 51.

The following letter, from the King to Lord Althorp, is a pleasing testimony of the justice which the latter was always ready to show to a political opponent :—

"WINDSOR CASTLE, *June 4th*, 1833.

"The King has received Viscount Althorp's letter of yesterday, from which His Majesty has learnt, with much satisfaction, that Mr. Stanley's first Resolution on the West India question has been carried unanimously. He rejoices that a young member has come forward in so promising a manner, as Viscount Althorp states Mr. W. E. Gladstone * to have done."

The progress of Ministerial measures in the Commons was constantly impeded by threats of opposition in the Lords. Thus the Irish Church Bill was almost strangled in Committee, by striking out the Appropriation Clause. It was understood that, at this price, the Bill would be allowed to pass the Lords. Lord Grey made the proposal to the Chancellor, who assented in haste, without much consideration. Lord Holland, unwilling to displease Lord Grey, and Sir James Graham, knowing that it would please Mr. Stanley, concurred. Lord Althorp, unfortunately confined to his room by a

* The future Premier.—AUTHOR.

1833. violent attack of gout, was consulted, and raised no
Æt. 51. difficulties. The clause therefore was negatived upon a division, in which the Ministers had a large majority; but so many of the Whigs voted in the minority, that Mr. Charles Wynn said to Mr. William Brougham,* "This is no triumph,—Look at the men in the minority. It is a melancholy day for the Church of England." The Irish were furious, and talked of breach of faith and the necessity of the Repeal of the Union. No person was more distressed than Lord Althorp, but he complained, with some justice, that when he dwelt on the Appropriation Clause in bringing forward the Bill, it was not treated as of any importance, nor did the Irish seem to regard it as such, in discussing the measure. I strongly suspect that O'Connell, in common with his Irish supporters, was very glad to have an additional pretence for opposition to English rule. It was afterwards known that the whole proceeding caused much discontent and disunion in the Cabinet. Lord Holland said to me, "It was a sad mistake. As Grey says, if we were all of one mind our course would be plain enough; but, with Stanley's views of the nature of Church property, we are obliged to resort to fallacies to obtain his support to liberal measures. The worst of it is, how is all this to end? Everything is in confusion. We dare not make public our measures before they are brought

* A brother of the Lord Chancellor, and M.P. for Southwark.—AUTHOR.

forward, lest we should alter them afterwards. 1833.
There is no certainty in our councils, and I fear that Æt. 51.
there will be no public confidence in them."

Even after the abandonment of the Appropriation Clause the fate of the Irish Church Bill in the Lords was left most uncertain. The following letter shows how deeply Lord Althorp felt the position of the Government :—

VISCOUNT ALTHORP TO EARL SPENCER.

"My Dear Father,

"I take the opportunity of the Committee on the East India Bill sittings in the morning, for which I am attending the House without taking any part in the discussion, to let you know the state of things. I agree very much with what you say in your last letter to me, for I do not think it probable we can go on as we are, without losing our characters. The attempt to carry on the Government of this country with a dead majority against us in the House of Lords must lead to disgrace to us and detriment to the country. I proposed therefore yesterday that we should resign; but my colleagues thought that it would not do till we had been in action on the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill. If I was sure that we should be beaten then I should think they were right, and what took place last night in the House of Lords makes me think this pretty certain. Lord Grey with this view pinned the Duke of Wellington to opposing the Second Reading, and he accepted the challenge, so I hope now there is no doubt of the result. Holmes told Charles Grey that they would beat us by two-and-twenty more than they did on the Local Courts, and I think it probable he will turn out to be about right. The King appears to have made up his mind, and the Tories are, I believe, prepared

1833. Æt. 51.

to attempt to take the Government. I hear there is to be a great Conservative dinner to-morrow, with the Speaker in the chair. This indicates that he is to be the Minister. Now the first effect of this will be a good deal of confusion, but I do not at all despair of the country. I have no doubt we shall weather the storm without revolution. And, moreover, things are got into such a state that I think the storm is necessary to put the country properly on its legs. If the Tories had acted with common honesty it would not have been necessary. The course of events that I foresee is first a dissolution of Parliament, then a failure in the new House of Commons on the part of the Tory Administration. The King must then again apply to the Whigs, and no Whig in his senses can attempt to form a Government unless the King will secure to him a majority in the House of Lords. This done, and the two Houses being thus brought to an agreement, everything will go on much more prosperously than it ever has done yet. Some things, however, will be materially changed. The Irish Church Establishment will fall to the ground, and by so doing will save the Church Establishment here. As far as I am personally concerned I shall vote myself *emeritus*. I think I have done my share, and I shall not offer myself again for Northamptonshire, but retire entirely from political life. I feel of course a good deal excited just now, and in better spirits than I have been in for a long time.

"I hear you have some doubts whether your sojourn at Ryde answers this year. I have felt the same doubts myself, and I am very much inclined to think that you will be more comfortable and better in health at Althorp than anywhere else. At all rates I should not advise your staying very long at Ryde.

"Yours most dutifully and affectionately,

"ALTHORP.

"HOUSE OF COMMONS,
*July 12th*, 1833."

The Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill was carried, contrary to Lord Althorp's expectation, after a violent opposition, although with some amendments, to which the Commons agreed, not without disparaging, if not insulting, comments on the measure from Mr. O'Connell. His imperturbable assurance, not less than his abilities, and the air of authority with which he expressed his opinion on all Irish matters, gradually gave him an influence on the new members most prejudicial to the Government. He spared no efforts to improve his position, being always ready to afford information to other members, and most bland and courteous in his intercourse with them. Notwithstanding his violent abuse of the Ministers in debate, he always professed in private to prefer them to the Tories, and with reason, for it was more difficult to agitate under a Tory than under a Whig Government. He went so far as to assure Lord Duncannon of his support, at the time when the hostile vote in the Lords on Portugal threatened another Ministerial crisis. He said at the same time, that overtures had been made to him by the Tories. 1833. Æt. 51.

The Irish Coercion Bill also passed with the modification of some of the most offensive clauses. Unfortunately the Ministers yielded to the pressure for the amendments, only after having divided against them; and some of their supporters who did not approve of the clauses, but were unwilling to abandon the Ministers, naturally complained of The Irish Coercion Bill.

1833. Æt. 51.

being so unnecessarily exposed to public animadversion.

Differences in the Cabinet.

The differences in the Cabinet continued to the end of the Session. They were no doubt aggravated by the indifference to office too often shown by Earl Grey and Lord Althorp. The latter, however, "pursued the even tenor of his way" amidst many difficulties; and encountered, as he constantly was, by two hostile factions, the Tories and the Radicals,—who appeared to agree in no political principle, and to have no common object but the embarrassment of the Ministry,—his temper and patience were subjected to severe trials. He had, however, the consolation of being instrumental in carrying a succession of measures* which have secured for the Session no mean name in history, whilst his reputation as the leader of the House continued unimpaired.

* These measures are stated in a note to p. 288 of "Reform Ministry and Reform Parliament," 9th edition, 1834. This pamphlet had an almost unprecedented circulation, many thousand copies being sold within a few weeks. I had the honour of being the editor, but the real merit of the book was in the contributions of Lord Althorp, Lord Stanley, Lord Palmerston, and Sir James Graham, with reference to the proceedings of their respective departments. The late Mr. Bellenden Ker, a barrister of great eminence as a chamber Counsel, and the late Captain Drummond, R.E., then private secretary to Lord Althorp, were almost equally useful in assisting me. Such was the interest taken on the Continent in English politics that nearly the whole of the book at once appeared in the leading French papers, and a German translation was eagerly brought up by the Jews at the Leipsic fair.—AUTHOR.

## CHAPTER XXII.

KING'S SPEECH.—BUDGET.—POOR LAW BILL.—CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY.—DIFFICULTIES OF THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT THE COERCION BILL.—RESIGNATION OF EARL GREY.—LORD MELBOURNE, PREMIER.—DEATH OF LORD SPENCER.—RETIREMENT OF LORD ALTHORP.

1834. Æt. 52.

Meeting of Parliament.

THE general aspect of public affairs at the close of the Recess must be considered as favourable to the Ministry. If the enthusiasm for the authors of the Reform Bill had passed away, it had been succeeded by a general impression that the Whigs alone could for the present govern the country. The Ministerial measures of the preceding Session had in almost every instance been attended with success; agitation in Ireland had been put down, and a decided revival of trade was admitted to have taken place throughout the manufacturing districts. Many of the members on the first meeting of Parliament gave most satisfactory assurances to Lord Althorp of the favourable disposition of their constituents, describing them as in excellent humour. Distress still prevailed in the agricultural districts, but not worse than before; and there was altogether a fair

1834. Æt. 52.

prospect of some suspension of political rancour, and the unusual comfort of a quiet Session.

Lord Althorp hoped under these circumstances to obtain a patient consideration of the topics which, in the violent conflict of parties, had hitherto received too little attention, such as the Poor Laws, Tithes, and Church Rates. These had been his chief study during the Recess, and were afterwards specially committed to his charge by Earl Grey in the programme of business for the Session.

Committee of enquiry.

The King's Speech, which had little to redeem it from the censure often passed on this class of Ministerial performances, was not ill received. On the next day, however, there was a scene in the House not unworthy of an Irish theatre, Mr. O'Connell and his followers being the principal performers. Lord Althorp, I am obliged to admit, supplied them with a fruitful source of declamation by imprudently saying, in reply to a question from Mr. O'Connell, that "he should not act a manly part if he did not declare that he had good reason to believe that some Irish members, certainly more than one, who had spoken and voted with considerable violence against the Coercion Bill, did, in private conversation, hold very different language." A report to that effect had met with general belief at the time, and Mr. O'Connell probably wished to punish "the traitors," as he designated the persons whom he suspected of thus disputing his supremacy. At his instigation the Irish members took up the inquiry, each rising to

ask Lord Althorp whether he was the person referred to. At length Lord Althorp named Mr. Sheil as one of the individuals to whom he alluded. Mr. Sheil indignantly denied the charge. A Committee of Inquiry was appointed, and it ended in his acquittal. He publicly repeated his denial in the House, and thereupon Lord Althorp retracted the charge and asked his pardon. In justice to Lord Althorp I ought to add that a young member, of high character and position, had volunteered to substantiate the charge before the Committee, but at the last moment threw himself on Lord Althorp's forbearance, entreating to be released from his engagement. He frankly owned that he acted by the advice of Mr. Abercromby, who had satisfied him that the betrayal of private conversation on any grounds was unjustifiable among gentlemen. Lord Althorp at once yielded to his request.

1834. Æt. 52.

Mr. Sheil and Mr. O'Connell.

The whole transaction bore such evident marks of Mr. O'Connell's contrivance that it was scarcely a nine days' wonder, and prejudiced neither Lord Althorp nor Mr. Sheil. It pained most their common friends. Mr. Sheil was known to hold Lord Althorp in high estimation, and to be an unwilling advocate of the extreme views of Mr. O'Connell, into whose train he had been drawn by the exigencies of his position. There were times when the tactics of Mr. O'Connell could not be otherwise than repugnant to a man of his honourable feelings, and being of an impulsive character he had probably expressed himself to that effect among

1834. Æt. 52.

friends, without much reflection, and not recollected it after several months' interval. He subsequently accepted office under Lord Melbourne, on the adoption of a more liberal policy in Ireland, when he seemed heartily glad to find himself among more congenial spirits.*

Lord Althorp made his financial statement so early as on the 14th of February, and he supplemented it on the 25th of July.

The Budget.

This was his last Budget, and also his most popular one; not that it gave complete satisfaction, for of the surplus (1,900,000*l.*) which his economical estimates and liberal commercial system had placed at his disposal, only an insignificant portion was awarded to the interest of all others the most depressed, viz., the agricultural interest, whilst the trading interests were relieved to the extent of at least 1,200,000*l.*, by the reduction of the House and Window duties. This, no doubt, was the fruit of the agitation of the preceding year, which the Ministry dreaded to see renewed, and the only valid excuse for it was the difficulty of meeting the demands of the agriculturists, for they would listen

* Mr. Sheil had been brought into Parliament by Lord Anglesey for a nomination borough. He made his first speech in the great Reform debate. After a few sentences, he nearly broke down; but recovering himself by a great effort, he recovered the attention of the House, and from that time might be considered as one of its most eloquent members. He never had much weight in the House, being too ready to speak on subjects with which he was imperfectly conversant, and more as an advocate than a statesman. Indeed, to the latter character he had no pretensions; but he was a gentleman and a scholar, so that he seemed quite out of his place among Mr. O'Connell's nominees.—AUTHOR.

to nothing except a repeal or modification of the Malt duty, a measure which no Chancellor of the Exchequer, Whig or Tory, has yet had the courage to propose. 1834. Æt. 52.

The most important feature in Lord Althorp's financial scheme, was the reduction of the 4 per cent. stock to a 3½ per cent. stock—a great saving to the public, which he was able to effect with the assistance of the Bank, by the application of the Savings Bank deposits to aid in paying dissentient holders of stock, a resource which, it must be owned, had not been in the power of the Tories when they failed in attempting a similar measure. The whole proceeding implied a degree of trust in the integrity of Ministers that reflects credit on our system of Government. The measure was perfectly successful.

The popularity of the Budget seems to have disheartened the Opposition. They brought forward no counter-proposition in favour of land. All they did, after a week's delay, was to move a Resolution that in any reduction of taxes, due regard should be paid to the necessity of relieving the distress of the agricultural interest, which had been alluded to in the King's speech, and on a division they were within only four of obtaining a majority.* This narrow escape put Lord Althorp on his guard

* The King did not disguise his satisfaction at the apparent strength of the agricultural interest on this occasion. He observes, in a letter to Lord Althorp, that their power was an additional security to the Constitution.—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

against some surprise, as in the year before, but none was attempted, because the Tory leaders gave no encouragement to these movements of their Protectionist supporters.

The Church-Rate Bill.

It will be unnecessary to dwell at any length on the Tithe Bill, or the Church Rates Bill, as neither of them became law. It had been agreed in the Cabinet, that unless they should meet with very general support, they must give way to the Poor Law Bill, which was regarded as more urgent and more ripe for discussion; an arrangement that proved a severe trial to Lord Althorp, as his statement of the plan of the Tithe Bill had succeeded beyond his expectations. No previous settlement of this most difficult question had found the same favour from the House, and the faint expression of doubt or dissent from a few members was not, in the opinion of the majority, a valid excuse for dropping the Bill.* The same may be said of his Church Rate Bill, which suffered a similar fate, being praised and withdrawn. I shall only notice that it provided for the abolition of church rates, and appropriated the sum of 250,000*l.* out of the Land Tax for the support of the fabrics of the Church throughout the kingdom. Dr. Lushington, and other leaders of the Liberal party had been consulted, and had approved of it; so did some of the most respectable Dissenters; but

* Lord Althorp's laborious calculations, on which the Bill was founded, are preserved among his papers, and show how deeply he had studied the subject.—AUTHOR.

the Radicals, and members connected with the violent section of the dissenting body, spurned any compromise; they insisted on their right to be exempted from this badge of inferiority to the Church Establishment, and their opposition threatened a long delay in the prosecution of the Poor Law Bill. So it was allowed to prevail, and the public scandal of squabbles in parish vestries lasted some thirty years longer. 1834. Æt. 52.

The Poor Law Bill, for which these sacrifices had been made, was the great measure of the Session, and may still be cited (next to the Reform Bill) as the most valuable, if not the most brilliant achievement of the Whig Ministry. It originated mainly with the Lord Chancellor and Lord Althorp. They had long felt the necessity of reconstructing the parochial system on sound principles, adapted to the altered state of society, and the correction of administrative abuses. With this view they organised the Commission from which issued the admirable Reports of the Sub-Commissioners on the condition of the poor throughout England, which alone brought the current of public opinion into a wholesome channel on the subject. These Reports, indeed, may be said to have carried the Bill.* The The Poor-Law Bill.

* Mr. Senior among the Commissioners, and Mr. Chadwick as sub-Commissioner and afterwards Commissioner, and subsequently Secretary to the first Poor-Law Commission, performed invaluable services in preparing the measure. The former was well known as an able lawyer and elegant writer. The latter was a man of letters, not previously employed in public affairs; but from that time he bore a distinguished part in various important Commissions.—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

scheme that rested on them, embracing the establishment of a Government Board of Management, a new Law of Bastardy, and the abolition of the allowance system, at first startled the Cabinet, and many were the meetings held to deliberate upon it. The Lord Chancellor or Lord Althorp always attended to explain and remove difficulties—a task which seriously interfered with their official duties. Some of the advanced Liberals, who were consulted, gave no encouragement to the measure, nor was it of a character to please political zealots. Mr. Barnes, the editor of the "Times," a person of acknowledged sagacity, pronounced it chimerical and unpractical. Lord Althorp moved for leave to bring in the Bill on the 17th of April, in a speech of considerable length. He made no attempt to disguise the stringent character of some of its provisions, and yet there was a touch of pathos in his remarks. In announcing the discontinuance of the allowance system, he observed,—"We shall be charged, perhaps, with treating poverty as a crime; this is not our intention, but we cannot help its being a misfortune." He was altogether very well received.

Mr. Grote had generously consented to second the motion, and his aid was invaluable on such an occasion. No one could suspect him of any leanings to the aristocracy, or indifference to the rights of the humblest of the people. He treated the subject with his usual judgment and candour. If his manner were somewhat formal, the closeness of his

reasoning, and the elegance of his diction, always commanded the attention of the House. The approval of the measure was almost unanimous, but many members expressed in private among themselves their misgivings as to the future. Mr. Hodges, one of the members for Kent,* said to me, "There will be an agrarian war in my county if this Bill becomes law." 1834. Æt. 52.

It was only in Committee that the Bill met with real opposition. There the Radicals and the Conservatives, sometimes united and sometimes apart, raised frequent obstructions to the progress of the measure. The Bastardy Clauses were generally treated as being unjustly severe on the women. The public feeling was decidedly against them, as being quite monstrous, and unworthy of a humane legislation. Considerable modification was made in them. The Tory leaders acted throughout with perfect fairness, and the Bill was read for the third time on the 1st of July. Lord Althorp, when subsequently asked, in consequence of some amendment made in the Lords, to withdraw the Bill and bring it forward in the next Session, at once declined, and answered, that it must be a bold man to undertake such a Bill again. The Lord Chancellor carried the Bill through the Lords with great ability—supported by the Duke of Wellington, whose conduct throughout was both straightforward and patriotic.

General support given by the Tories to the Poor Law Bill.

* Mr. Hodges was also Chairman of Quarter Sessions, and a country gentleman of great local influence.—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

It was generally admitted that none but a Liberal Government would have ventured to brave the prejudices of the people against this sweeping reform. The Tories never attempted it in their long lease of power, and it must be confessed that they might have fairly distrusted the forbearance of the Whigs in the contest which such a proposal would probably have provoked. The measure, indeed, was so conservative in its complexion that the Whigs were aware that in undertaking it they must not look for mere party support, and might have to depend on the Tories, whose connection generally with the landed interest made them the chief gainers by the new law.

A few days after the successful introduction of the Poor Law Bill, I happened to be at Holland House, when I expressed to Lady Holland (certainly one of the cleverest women of her day) my satisfaction at the improved prospects of the Ministry.* She shook her head, and observed in a melancholy tone, "There is no improvement! these young men are breaking up the Government. I am very angry with John Russell." There were no outward signs at this time of the catastrophe apprehended by Lady Holland. Indeed, when Mr.

Mr. Ward's motion

* I wish that I had the ability to do justice to Lady Holland. Great as were Lord Holland's accomplishments, I believe that she fully shared with him the attractions that gave to their home an almost European celebrity. She reminded me at times of Madame Geoffroi, like whom she enjoyed the homage of the most eminent men of her day. Talleyrand and Sydney Smith were amongst her most frequent guests and appeared to great advantage in her society. I can add, from experience, that she was a warm and genuine friend.—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

Ward gave notice of his motion against the Irish Church, it seemed to excite little of interest or alarm in the House. He had neither personal influence nor connection with Ireland, and hardly the parliamentary experience to justify his bringing forward a motion of such importance. Lord Mulgrave, who was his cousin, expostulated with him, urging him to drop it, if only for his own interests; but he declined, saying that if he did not make the motion some one else would, and as he had no hostile feeling towards the Ministry, nothing should be heard from him to their prejudice or inconvenience.

against the Irish Church.

The effect of the Notice was the immediate revival of the dissensions in the Cabinet. When, during the debate on the motion, Mr. Stanley wrote "Johnny has upset the coach," he forgot that this imputation rested more justly on himself, for his resistance (however conscientious) to the wishes of Lord Grey and the majority of his colleagues, proved more injurious to the Government than all the attacks of Mr. O'Connell. The appointment of a Commission to inquire into the revenues of the Irish Church, was one of the expedients devised, I suspect, by the Lord Chancellor* for removing the scruples of Mr. Stanley, and it might have succeeded but for the interference of Sir James

Resignation of Mr. Stanley and Sir J. Graham.

* The Chancellor told me, in high spirits, on returning from the Cabinet, that he had hit upon a plan which he thought had satisfied Mr. Stanley, and would restore harmony to the Administration. If Mr. Stanley had yielded, the others would have done the same.—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

Graham, who had gained immense influence over him, and foresaw the failure of the proposal. At length they both resigned. The King at first would not accept their resignations, hoping, no doubt, that they might yet carry their views in the Cabinet, and it was only on the very day of Mr. Ward's motion, during the progress of the debate, that their secession was finally settled. Lord Althorp felt that the loss of such colleagues could not be supplied, and proposed to break up the Government. This was prevented mainly by the active exertions of the Lord Chancellor, who kept the sinking ship afloat for the short and rather inglorious voyage that finished her course.

Adjournment of Mr. Ward's motion.

Mr. Ward's motion was adjourned (after he had made a long, tedious, and unimpressive speech) until the 3rd of June.*

New appointments in the Cabinet.

In the meanwhile the vacancies in the Cabinet were filled up, at the cost of fresh differences among the Ministers. Lord Auckland's appointment to the Admiralty met with decided opposition from the Chancellor,† and no favour from the public. Lord Lansdowne took umbrage at some of the arrangements, and resigned in consequence, nor was he

* Mr. Ward spoke with great fluency, but with little force of expression. He seemed to have learnt his speeches by heart. He succeeded best as a Colonial administrator, and made an admirable Governor of Ceylon, where his memory is still held in veneration, for his improvement of the resources of the island, and his enlightened management of its public affairs.—AUTHOR.

† Lord Auckland, besides being a very poor speaker, was not considered in other respects equal to the post which had been so ably filled by Sir James Graham.—AUTHOR.

easily prevailed upon to alter his determination. It is to the credit of Mr. Stanley that he wrote to him, urging in strong terms the necessity of preserving the Liberal interest, by making no more changes, and recommended him earnestly to remain in office. 1834. Æt. 52.

With this exception, the Ministers brought into the Cabinet by Lord Grey were generally approved. Mr. Spring Rice had been an excellent Secretary of the Treasury, was a ready speaker, and thoroughly conversant with Irish affairs. Mr. Abercromby's independence, his devotion to the Liberal cause, tried by many years of service in Opposition, with his weight as a speaker and a lawyer, carried the respect of the party. Mr. Ellice was a general favourite in the House, his readiness to oblige being as remarkable as the extent of his influence and connections. Never, perhaps, had there been a more efficient and popular (political) Secretary of the Treasury. He was always a firm and consistent Liberal of the Radical school, having been much allied with Mr. Whitbread, who was his early friend and near connection by marriage. His knowledge was not derived from books, for he was too fond of society to be a deep reader, but he had picked up much useful information on the questions of the day that most engaged public attention, and he could speak readily, fluently, and plausibly on them. Courage and dexterity supplied his deficiencies. A pleasant address, and an exemption from the social prejudices of the Whigs, told also in his favour.

1834. Æt. 52. Altogether he was a most valuable member of the party. Careless of his own personal interests, his sagacity and independence gave him deserved weight, especially when out of office, with men in power. He suggested most of Lord Melbourne's appointments, and was concerned in many of Lord John Russell's.

Mr. Baring, the new Secretary of the Treasury, succeeded Mr. Spring Rice, to the great satisfaction of Lord Althorp, who describes him in a letter to Lord Spencer as a person of first-rate abilities, and the strictest integrity and truthfulness. There was no one in the party to whom Lord Althorp looked in all emergencies with more confidence, and this feeling was mutual. His manner was cold, and his disposition reserved, so that he had few friends, or even political followers, but no man was more respected or trusted by those who had to deal with him, as was shown when he came into high office. He had a clear head, and a considerable power of reasoning,* and was a sound and well-informed financier. In a diligent performance of his official duties he had no superior.

The few weeks of Lord Grey's reconstructed Ministry brought only fresh disappointment and mortification to Lord Althorp. The first meeting

* His speech in 1831, in defence of himself and his brother magistrates in Hampshire, against the attack of Colonel De Lacy Evans, was of a high order and most effective. The Lord Advocate of Scotland said to me at the time that it was perfectly admirable and conclusive. It at once put down the clamour raised by the Radicals and the press on the case.—AUTHOR.

of their supporters in Downing Street (on the 3rd of June) with reference to Mr. Ward's (adjourned) motion on that day was an entire failure. Lord Althorp's announcement of the issue of the Irish Church Commission as virtually answering the object of the motion was very coldly received, larger concessions being evidently expected, although a strong feeling had now risen through the country in the opposite direction, and the King had only a few days before made a sympathising reply to an Address of the Irish Bishops. 1834. Æt. 52.

Renewed debates on the Irish Church Bill.

The adjourned debate was of the same unsatisfactory character. Notwithstanding the accession of strength to the more Liberal section of the Cabinet, a marked distrust of the sincerity of the Government appeared among the Radicals and the Irish. They deprecated Lord Althorp's proposed amendment (the Previous Question). They treated the Church Commission almost as a subterfuge, whilst Mr. O'Connell and his followers ridiculed and abused it. The Tories gave it no quarter. The wonder of the night, however, was the contrast between the speeches of Mr. Stanley and Sir Robert Peel. The former was worthy of a royalist divine in the days of the Stuarts, whilst the latter was in so liberal a tone that Mr. Ellice observed to me, that he (Sir Robert) ought to have been Mr. Stanley's successor. He certainly took care not to be identified with Mr. Stanley's Irish policy. The result at one time looked extremely doubtful, as many of the Tories talked of going away with-

1834. Æt. 52.

out voting, but were stopped by Sir Robert Peel, and that alone gave the Ministers a majority, which, however large, could not be regarded as a true expression of the opinion of the House on the proceedings of the Government. The tone of the debate was decidedly unfavourable to the Ministers, and their hold on their party seemed seriously shaken.

The Appropriation question.

Lord Althorp himself appears to have agreed to the Commission as a half measure, which might prepare the minds of the public for some compromise on the Appropriation question. His father, although in most respects a decided Liberal, seems to have entertained no such hopes, as may be inferred from the following letter to his son :—

"ALTHORP, *June 16th*, 1834.

"DEAR JACK,

"Thanks to you for taking so much trouble in letting me know, more correctly than I did before, the exact nature of the present views of the Administration on the subject in question.

"It may be true that the subject of Appropriation is dropt by the vote of the House on the previous question, but the appointment of the Commission of Enquiry involves the principle, and if the Commissioners should be found capable of acting, *which I much doubt*, it appears to me that no property can thereafter be considered safe.

"Under this view of the subject, in consenting to my proxy being re-entered, I must so far limit the powers delegated by it, as to declare that I do not mean to include in them every kind of appropriation which may hereafter be proposed, and, on this understanding, I authorize

my proxy being re-entered whenever and in whatever peer's name you choose. 1834. Æt. 52.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"SPENCER."

In this state of parties the difficulty attending all legislation on Irish questions was greatly increased. Well might the Ministers be troubled at the necessity of passing the Tithe and Coercion Bills in the face of an opposition which comprised, besides Mr. O'Connell and the Irish, many of the old Parliamentary Reformers, as well as several of the young independent members, such as Mr. Charles Buller and Mr. Edward Lytton Bulwer (since Lord Lytton), who eagerly sought distinction without, perhaps, much regard for the difficulties of their political chiefs, whose power of administration they had indeed severely criticised in private. The Tithe Bill had already undergone many alterations to propitiate Mr. O'Connell and his friends without any effect beyond lowering the character of the Ministers, and now it was threatened with violent opposition in Committee. The Coercion Bill rested on different grounds, and although it might be said to command the support of a majority, was equally sure to provoke the most furious assaults of a formidable minority. Lord Althorp was not daunted by these appearances. He felt that he had a Whig force supporting him which, when it was absolutely necessary, could beat the Tories and Radicals united,* and he awaited the conflict with his usual The Irish Coercion Bill.

* Letter to Lord Brougham, MS.

1834. Æt. 52.

coolness. The position of affairs, however, especially the charge of these two Bills, weighed heavily on the mind of Mr. Littleton (the Secretary for Ireland), a man of talent and intelligence, but of a nature partaking rather of the willow than the oak,* and at the instigation of the Lord Chancellor he adopted a very questionable course to promote what he considered a great public good. Believing, as he did, that the clauses in the Coercion Bill for the prohibition of public meetings would be an insurmountable obstacle to any understanding with Mr. O'Connell and the Irish members both on that measure and the Tithe Bill, he had written on the 19th of June to the Lord Lieutenant (with whom he was connected by marriage), and prevailed on him to write to Lord Grey that the re-enactment of those clauses was no longer necessary for the peace of the country. This latter, dated the 21st of June, caused Lord Grey the utmost surprise and concern, as he remembered that Lord Wellesley's correspondence, even as recently as the 11th† of that month, had expressed an exactly opposite opinion.

Mr. Littleton's communication with Lord Wellesley.

Lord Wellesley writes that the clauses for the prohibition of public meetings are unnecessary.

So firm was his conviction that this change of view must have been owing to home influence, that he wrote to the Lord Lieutenant a strong remonstrance‡ on this marked and sudden inconsistency. Lord Wellesley, however, in his reply, still main-

* There was far more danger to the Government, in his estimation, from the violent hostility of O'Connell in the House than from the risk of public meetings in Ireland.—AUTHOR.

† See Lord Grey's letter, p. 498.

‡ *Ib.*

tained the position taken in his last letter, and although on the 2nd of July he did write to Lord Melbourne,* "It would be highly dangerous to the public peace to allow the Act for 'the more effectual suppression of local disturbances and dangerous associations in Ireland' to expire," this recantation was too late to be of service to the Ministry. 1834. Æt. 52.

In the meantime Lord Althorp, on hearing from Mr. Littleton that Lord Wellesley pronounced so strongly against the renewal of the clauses, agreed that they must be given up, as no Government could ask Parliament for an unconstitutional power in Ireland, the necessity of which had been disclaimed by the Lord Lieutenant.† At the same time he feared Lord Grey would refuse any concession, and might retire if it were pressed; Lord Althorp even went so far as to say that he would himself resign rather than allow the clauses to be renewed. Mr. Littleton thereupon asked him, whether, as Mr. O'Connell was about to enter upon a new course of agitation in Ireland, it would not be prudent to see him and apprise him that the precise form and extent of the measure were not decided upon. Lord Althorp "saw no harm in this, if it went no farther; but he begged Mr. Littleton to be extremely cautious, and not to commit himself."‡ If Mr. Littleton had kept within these instructions, probably no harm would have been done; but he most indis- Lord Althorp's opinion that the clauses must be given up.

Mr. Littleton's conversation with Mr. O'Connell.

* Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 49.
† *Ib.*, p. 13.
‡ Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. xxiv., p. 1336.

1834. Æt. 52. creetly allowed himself to be drawn by Mr. O'Connell into an admission that the renewal of the clauses was desired neither by the Lord Lieutenant nor by himself; and on Mr. O'Connell expressing a doubt whether the opinion of the Irish Government might not be overruled by the Cabinet, he said that his own opinion was so decided that he did not think it possible for him to vote for the measure unless it were stripped of the obnoxious clauses, admitting at the same time that Lord Althorp's sentiments coincided with his own;* but he added that as soon as the question was decided Mr. O'Connell should be informed. To make the indiscretion complete, Mr. Littleton left Lord Althorp in ignorance of what he had done, being satisfied with receiving a pledge of secrecy from Mr. O'Connell.

On the meeting of the Cabinet at Holland House, a few days after, upon the evening of Sunday, the 29th of June, to deliberate on the Lord Lieutenant's suggestion, Lord Grey, as had been foreseen, was most emphatic and decided in his refusal to make the least concession. Lord Melbourne sided with him. For this Lord Althorp had been prepared; but great were his surprise and disappointment on finding that the Lord Chancellor now took the same line.† Yet even this defection of his intimate friend and principal supporter was less mortifying than the

* Lord Hatherton's Memoir, pp. 14, 20, 57.

† The Chancellor had probably been in communication with Lord Grey before the Cabinet, and was convinced of the certainty of Lord Grey's resigning if overruled on the question.—AUTHOR.

intelligence that Lord Grey had—as he now mentioned for the first time—received a private letter from the Lord Lieutenant of a very different tenor* to that written at the instigation of Mr. Littleton. This letter urged the renewal of the Coercion Bill without expressing any desire that the clauses under discussion should be modified. Lord Althorp was placed by this inconsistency in great difficulty. He felt the ground to be cut from under him, and that the Lord Lieutenant's opinion was no longer entitled to the consideration which he had before attached to it. Still it was the declared opinion of the great officer responsible for the peace of Ireland, and as such could not be passed over. He divided the Cabinet against the clauses, and was left in a minority; none of the others, however, were disposed to carry their opposition further, much less to resign. All concurred in opinion that the question was not one of vital importance, and that Lord Grey under the circumstances was so far justified in his view of the transaction as to leave them without a case for resisting the decision of the majority.

1834. Æt. 52.

Lord Althorp is overruled in the Cabinet.

Lord Althorp could not, however, abandon his position without a further struggle; and as soon as he returned home, before he went to bed, he ad-

He declines to propose the clauses.

* All Lord Wellesley's letters to Lord Grey, previous to the 21st of June, had expressed in the strongest terms his opinion that the entire Bill except the "Court Martial Clauses," (which authorized twelve officers, who were nicknamed "The Twelve Apostles," with the help of a barrister, to try certain crimes) should be renewed. (See also Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 63).—AUTHOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

dressed a letter to Lord Grey reiterating his objections to the clauses, and declaring that he could not propose them in the House of Commons. He probably hoped that such a remonstrance being tantamount to a tender of his resignation, would have more weight than if it had been made in a Cabinet Council; but he was mistaken. Lord Grey was immovable. In a long and argumentative reply, written evidently in great agitation, he defended the clauses, as will be seen from the following letter :—

"DOWNING STREET, (*Monday*) *June 30th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"Your letter, as you anticipated, has certainly distressed me to the greatest degree; I at present see no way out of our difficulties but that of resigning the government. That I was induced to go on after the division that took place in the former Cabinet is now to me an object of increased regret; I could then have retired on grounds which nobody could have disapproved—I am now brought into a situation in which whatever care I take, I must be exposed to censure and reproach. . . . I fully admit that necessity is the only ground on which measures of that description can be justified; the necessity for re-enacting the Coercion Bill, with the omission only of the Court Martial clauses, was felt by us all up to the 23rd instant; on that day I received the first letter from Wellesley, which, in direct opposition to his own strongly declared opinion on the 11th, expressed his acquiescence in suggestions which he had received from home of the expediency of leaving out of the Bill the clauses respecting meetings, not on account of any change which had taken place in the state of affairs in Ireland, but for the sake of

facilities which this omission might afford us here. His second letter, in answer to the strong representation which I made to him in answer to his letter of the 21st, does not materially vary this ground. I must, therefore, look at circumstances as they are and as they relate to his two very opposite communications, and, considering the state of Ireland, I cannot divest myself of the opinion that the abandonment of the provisions of the Bill which relate to meetings would be attended with the utmost danger. . . . I feel that I have great reason to complain that, after a measure had been agreed upon, and no doubt existed with respect to it, private communications are made to the Lord Lieutenant without my knowledge, which induce him to express an opinion inconsistent with that which his own views of the state of Ireland have suggested, and chiefly maintained on grounds from which I entirely dissent. . . . The Bill as it has been agreed upon must be maintained stoutly, or I must say to the King that I can no longer conduct the Government. . . . A difference with you is that which affects me most, but I cannot ask you to violate a conscientious opinion, and you, I am sure, will feel that it is equally impossible for me to acquiesce in a course from which my judgment entirely dissents.

1834. Æt. 52.

"Ever yours,

"GREY."

He afterwards withdraws his resignation.

This letter and the interviews which followed worked so powerfully on the feelings of Lord Althorp, if not on his judgment, that he yielded to Lord Grey's persuasions, convinced that otherwise the Ministry must be at once broken up. The tender of his resignation was therefore suspended, and not mentioned beyond the Cabinet. He simply told Mr. Littleton that the Bill was to be renewed

1834. Æt. 52.

without alteration, as Lord Grey would concede nothing. No reference was made by either to their previous conversation. There may have been some scruples on the part of Lord Althorp about disclosing the doubts entertained by himself and his colleagues of the value in this instance of the Lord Lieutenant's judgment; there certainly was a want of candour, if not of moral courage, in Mr. Littleton still withholding the extent to which he had committed the Government with Mr. O'Connell. If he had spoken out before the Cabinet met, it is most probable that the intervention of some common political friends would have been obtained to shame Mr. O'Connell into keeping his promise of secrecy. Several of them were shocked at his subsequent conduct, and did not scruple to reproach him for it. If this had failed, Lord Althorp would at all hazards have persisted in his opposition to the clauses, and the Ministry would have retired under circumstances far less painful than those which afterwards took place.

Irish Coercion Bill read the first time in the Lords.

There being no longer any cause for delay, the Coercion Bill was (on the 1st of July) read for the first time in the House of Lords on Lord Grey's assurance of its having been required and approved by the Irish Government. Mr. O'Connell, who was present at the time, waited over the next day, and then, in a

Debate in the Commons.

burst of pretended indignation rose in the House of Commons and disclosed the communication made to him by Mr. Littleton, amounting to an absolute contradiction of the assurance given by Lord Grey, and

implicating to a certain degree Lord Althorp as adopting a measure of which he disapproved. He added that the object of the Government had been to gain time for carrying the Wexford election. Lord Althorp then heard for the first time imputations of unfairness and misrepresentation urged against the Government, utterly unfounded, and yet not to be refuted without explanations which the ties of friendship and of party made him most anxious to withhold, and he saw in the dismayed looks of the Ministerialists the advantage thus perfidiously gained by Mr. O'Connell. He made no remark, probably waiting to consult Lord Grey. Mr. Littleton at once admitted that he had been guilty of a gross indiscretion in his communication to Mr. O'Connell, and commented with spirit both on the betrayal of private confidence and on the miserable pretext with which it was cloaked. No business was attended to afterwards, and the House broke up in confusion.

1834. Æt. 52.

The scene in the Lords the next day was hardly less extraordinary. Lord Grey, in a warm disavowal of any knowledge of the communication with Mr. O'Connell, allowed it to be understood that the question was completely settled at the time that Mr. Littleton had represented it to be unsettled. This was a mere misunderstanding, and easy to be set right; but the consequences were disastrous to the Government. Mr. Littleton felt most deeply the imprudence of which he had been guilty in trusting Mr. O'Connell, and thought that

Tender of resignation by Mr. Littleton.

1834. Æt. 52. the only way to atone for what had passed was to resign. At that period he does not seem to have entertained the slightest idea that Lord Althorp was implicated in company with himself in the difficulties with Mr. O'Connell, as will be seen from the following letter,* written by him on Mr. O'Connell's statement in the House of Commons :—

"GROSVENOR PLACE, *July 3rd*, 1834.

"DEAR LORD ALTHORP,

"I am so deeply impressed with all the embarrassments in which my indiscretion in having trusted O'Connell has placed the Government, that I must entreat that Lord Grey will not hesitate one moment to tell me if my retirement can in any way diminish the difficulties in which I have placed you. It is only because I cannot myself see in what way my resignation can assist you, that I do not at once take that step. My clear duty is to take that course, whatever it may be, which the Government desires. I wish you may be more fortunate than I am in discovering any satisfactory path by which to extricate yourselves from this dilemma.

"Yours faithfully,

"E. J. LITTLETON."

This letter Lord Althorp answered in a friendly strain, and without the slightest suggestion in it that he considered himself, or thought others con-

* Of this important letter Lord Hatherton could not have kept a copy, as it does not appear in his Memoir; but it is referred to as "a note in which I expressed my willingness to retire if my doing so could at all relieve the embarrassment in which my imprudence and O'Connell's perfidy had placed them." (Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 56.)—EDITOR.

sidered him, in any way a *particeps criminis* with Mr. Littleton. 1834. Æt. 52.

"DOWNING STREET, *July 4th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR LITTLETON,

"The scrape we are in I admit to be a great one, but I do not see how your resignation will do us any good now. If you had resigned when I told you first of the decision of the Cabinet, it would have been better for *yourself;* but it must have broken up the Government. If you resign now you will injure yourself and do us no good. I will show your letter to Lord Grey. I think you were quite right in making the offer, and it is possible, but I do not think probable, that he may differ from me as to the course to be pursued. I confess I do not see my way very clearly. What I should like best is, that we should be beaten on the three clauses in the House of Commons—a thing I think extremely probable—and then of course Lord Grey, and indeed all of us, must resign, and so get out of all difficulty. I wish only you had told me at first the whole of the conversation you had with O'Connell, and I then would have taken a course which would have saved you from this scrape. Because had I known what you had done I would have stood firm, and smashed the Government at once. I have not seen Lord Grey yet since the scene in the House of Commons; he was out all yesterday evening. I am very doubtful whether he may not think the scrape irremediable. I think it nearly so.

"Yours most truly,

"ALTHORP."

Lord Grey's reply* to this offer was what Lord Althorp anticipated, and the following letter from

* It was written on the 5th of July, and is given at length in Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 63.—EDITOR.

1834. Æt. 52.

the Lord Chancellor shows how strongly he also deprecated this act on the part of Mr. Littleton.

"My dear Althorp,

"This move of Littleton's is of all the things I ever yet heard the most utterly inconceivable. He does it, he says, to relieve us from embarrassment, but it is no relief to any one, and will only gratify the Orangemen, whom none of us wish much to please—as I should think. But it is ruinous to himself, and as his friend and well-wisher, I really think I cannot let him commit such an act of self-destruction. . . . One thing is certain, that if we let it in any way influence our own conduct, we place ourselves in the most absurd light we ever stood in. However, as I see nothing clearly, except the folly of Littleton's conduct, I certainly shall do all I can to turn him from this act of insanity.

"Yours ever,

"H. B."

It is not accepted.

Mr. Littleton's resignation not having been accepted, Lord Althorp, at his urgent request, came forward on the 7th of July* to relieve him from the imputation of having practised any deception on Mr. O'Connell, affirming that Mr. Littleton had good grounds for saying that the clauses were still under the consideration of the Cabinet, and for expressing a hope that they would not be inserted in the Bill. With respect to the communication itself, Lord Althorp added that he saw no indiscretion on the part of Mr. Littleton in informing Mr. O'Connell that the question was not yet

Speech by Lord Althorp.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. xxiv., p. 1222.

decided.* This appears to have satisfied Mr. Littleton; but the Opposition had further aims. In their eagerness to increase the embarrassments of the Ministry by an exposure of the differences in the Cabinet, they clamoured for more information, and even Sir Robert Peel aided the cry by his support. A motion was threatened for the production of the private correspondence of members of the Irish Government with members of the Government in England. This completed the disgust of Lord Althorp. He could not brook the humiliation of being put on his defence against charges which he did not regard as legitimate objects of inquiry by the House. He also knew too well the morbid curiosity of members to push such inquiry to an improper extent. He therefore determined to resign, and the same night addressed the following letter to Lord Grey :—

1834. Æt. 52.

Resignation of Lord Althorp.

"Downing Street, *July 7th*, 1834.

"My dear Lord Grey,

"Upon my moving that the papers be printed, O'Connell moved an amendment that they should be referred to a Select Committee. We beat him on the division by 157 to 73, but the debate which preceded the division

* Mr. Littleton writes to Lord Wellesley (on the 8th): "Lord Althorp's statement respecting myself yesterday was nothing more than what I had expected from him. I did not require him and Brougham to expose themselves to save me. But I am not surprised that Lord Althorp, reflecting on the part that he had in the whole affair, judged it due to himself as well as to me to say what he did. Except on the score of having gone too far with O'Connell, it puts me quite clear with the public."—(Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 81.)—Author.

1834. placed us in so disgraceful a position that I cannot expose
Æt. 52. myself to being in the same position again.

"I felt from the first moment I heard what Littleton had told O'Connell that, had I known it at the time we discussed these three clauses in the Cabinet, the only course I could have pursued was to have persevered in the views which I submitted to you in my letter written on Sunday evening,* because I felt that O'Connell having been acquainted with the real state of the case, it would be utterly impossible for us to defend the Bill in the House of Commons. I however, as you know, gave way to your wishes, as it has always been my most anxious desire to do. When I found from Littleton's speech, on Thursday, that he had committed himself so far as he had, I foresaw the greatest difficulty in going on; but I was determined to try. The debate of to-night proves to me that it is impossible to persevere in the course which we have engaged in, without total ruin to our characters. I am in a worse position now than I should have been if I had resigned on Sunday se'nnight; but every day that this question is debated I shall sink from bad to worse, and I do not think that, after allowing myself to be dragged through the dirt, night after night, there is a chance of my being able to carry these clauses. I am sure there is no chance of my preserving any remains of character. Peel attacked us on one side, and O'Connell on the other. I did not know what to say, and I could only make a shuffling speech, half admitting and half denying that Lord Wellesley had said that these clauses were unnecessary. We shall be pressed on the subject night after night, Peel and O'Connell will act together against us in calling for more information, and I do not know how to resist them. I made up my mind, without communicating to any one; when I told Abercromby and Ellice, they, I found, were entirely of my opinion, and Charles Grant is so too. I think Spring Rice is also.

* See p. 498.

"This being the state of the case, I have only to request you to accept my resignation. I regret the consequences which must result from this; but it is some comfort to me, as far as you are concerned, that your conduct will stand the test of entire publicity; that you will require no explanation, and that you will retire from no fault of your own, but with your character standing as high as any man's, even yours, ever did. 1834. Æt. 52.

"Yours most truly,

"ALTHORP."

No reply appears to have been written to this letter. It very soon transpired that Lord Grey was deeply distressed by it, and that he sought in vain the next day by earnest expostulations, in a long interview, to prevail on Lord Althorp to withdraw it. In the meanwhile Mr. Littleton, to whom Lord Althorp had previously communicated his intentions, also fruitlessly interposed, and the following correspondence ensued:—

"Grosvenor Place, *July 8th*, 1834.

"Dear Lord Althorp,

"I cannot refrain from writing one line to express my conviction that there is not a man in the country who would not hear with the most extreme surprise of your resignation on the grounds on which you appear to think it necessary. I did not hear last night the slightest surmise of the possibility of any such occurrence in any quarter.

"The private correspondence, of course, cannot be given. One discussion and division will settle that business. Thus much is quite clear to me, that that discussion and division ought to be taken before resignation is thought of.

"I do hope you will consent to reconsider this step,

1834. Æt. 52.

which I deem most ill-advised and quite unnecessary, and which, I repeat, will be a surprise beyond measure to the whole country.

"Yours faithfully,

"E. J. LITTLETON."

THE RIGHT HON. E. J. LITTLETON TO EARL GREY.

"Grosvenor Place, *July 8th*, 1834.

"My dear Lord,

"I cannot express to you my affliction at the position to which I find by a note from Lord Althorp this morning, I have been unintentionally the cause of reducing the Government. Had I believed it possible that his mind could have received such an impression respecting his own situation from the explanation he made in my favour yesterday evening, I never would have allowed a word to be said.

"His resignation would fill the whole country with surprise. I was in the House till two this morning, and never heard the most distant surmise from any one member of the possibility of such a thing. The common observation of our friends was, 'We must make a good muster to resist any motion respecting private correspondence.' They were all prepared to resist it, and nothing is wanting but a declaration from Lord Althorp to our friends that he means to do so. . . . . I am most sensible of your Lordship's kind and considerate conduct towards me throughout this painful affair, an affair however which, as far as Lord Althorp is concerned, ought only to be felt to be embarrassing on public grounds.

"Yours faithfully,

"E. J. LITTLETON."

1834.
Æt. 52.

"DOWNING STREET, *July 8th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR LITTLETON,

"Althorp's determination is final and irrevocable. The Government is consequently at an end.

"I will say nothing more of the circumstances which have led to this. They are much too painful for me to reflect upon.

"Ever yours,

"GREY."

Resignation of Lord Grey.

These were not mere words. Lord Grey at once resigned, and on the following day he announced his resignation to the House of Lords, in a speech of which the dignity and honourable feeling were equally conspicuous. He carefully abstained from any complaint, and gave his colleagues credit for the best intentions in the transactions that led to his retirement.

Lord Althorp at the same time made a corresponding statement in the House of Commons. His modest tone, and perfect candour, were quite in keeping with his usual bearing, and he left nothing unsaid that he considered due to his own character or that of his associates. He expressed indeed his continued disapprobation of the meeting clauses in the Coercion Bill, and he admitted the sanction he had given to Mr. Littleton to communicate with Mr. O'Connell with the reserve before mentioned. Finally he confirmed Lord Grey's announcement that the Government was at an end. The House was evidently not prepared for

1834. Æt. 52.

such a crisis, nor did any expression of feeling follow that could be said to throw light on the view taken by the members of these transactions.

That the course adopted by Lord Althorp in concert with his colleagues was especially distasteful to the Lord Chancellor the following letter sufficiently proves:

THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"*July 9th*, 1834.

"My dear Althorp,

"I inclose a copy of my letter to the King. I stated the same thing in my place. Your step of resigning has I fear sealed the fate of this country. Rather than be plagued by two or three speeches addressed to a House of Commons which has more confidence in you than ever, you have done your best to dissolve the only Government the country will bear, and I hear that Abercromby and Rice are afraid to remain.

"I regard them, next to you, as the cause of all the mischief which may ensue; they too are resolved to fly from their posts and deliver us over to the Tories and the mob, in succession, because they don't like being badgered.

"I shall do all I can to ward off the calamity; but how can I if every one in the House of Commons is afraid to keep his ground? At least I am resolved that the country shall see who it has to thank for whatever is to happen.

"I really must say, I look upon all of you as answerable, and most deeply answerable, for the event.

"One thing of course you must make up your minds to. As you and your companions in desertion will most probably prevent a Liberal Government from being made, you are of course prepared to give your cordial support to a

Tory one. Surely you don't mean we should have no Government. 1834. Æt. 52.

"Yours ever,

"H. B."

This letter gave Lord Althorp an opportunity of expressing his sentiments to the Lord Chancellor, which he did in a dignified remonstrance, reviewing all the circumstances without the reserve necessary to an official explanation in Parliament.

"Downing Street, *July 10th*, 1834.

"My dear Brougham,

"I admit that I am answerable as the proximate cause of the dissolution of the Administration, but the situation in which I was placed was not by any act of my own. I wish you would look a little at the share you have taken in the business. Without communication with one of your colleagues, with the view I know of facilitating business in Parliament, you desired Littleton to write to Lord Wellesley, and you wrote to him yourself, to press him to express an opinion that the three first clauses of the Bill might be omitted. He did express that opinion, and I thought, and still think, that when the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland said that any circumstance of expediency would induce him to carry on the Government of that country by the ordinary law, to whatever extent he made that admission it was the duty of the Government here to agree with him. He had said, he did not want the Court-Martial Clauses; we properly omitted them. He then said, he could go on without these three clauses, and I think we ought to have omitted them also: but you, having originally produced the difficulty by writing to Lord Wellesley, gave your decision directly against what you had advised Lord

1834. Æt. 52.

Wellesley to do. The consequence of all this was that I got placed in a position which rendered it impossible for me to go on. This impossibility was mainly produced by Littleton's communication to O'Connell, but even without this the difficulty was likely to be enormous.

"I am aware that the man who by his resignation produces the dissolution of an Administration takes a great load upon his shoulders, and more especially when there is so much difficulty in forming another; this load is increased greatly when he cannot explain the causes which compelled him to take such a step without involving others, whom for every reason he is determined not to involve. That load I must bear; but it never can compel me to support measures of which I disapprove, though, if no other than a Tory Government can be formed, it may render it incumbent upon me not to give them a factious opposition.

"Yours most truly,

"ALTHORP."

Dissolution of the Government.

Thus abruptly ended, and from no adequate cause, the Administration that carried the Reform Bill, and laid the foundation of the Liberal policy which has ever since, with short intervals, ruled the affairs of the country. The catastrophe was at the time attributed wholly to the indiscretion of Mr. Littleton, and it is only after a silence of forty years that an attempt has been made to shift the blame upon Lord Althorp, chiefly on the authority of a Memoir left behind him by Mr. Littleton.* Had

* It may at once be admitted that at the time of Mr. Littleton's communication with Mr. O'Connell he was justified in his own mind in the belief that the Bill would be restricted to the extent he stated; but he is wholly unwarranted in asserting that for his communication with O'Connell he had the express authority of Lord Althorp. The

this appeared in Lord Althorp's lifetime it would have been easily answered by him, and is indeed hardly compatible with the feelings of admiration for Lord Althorp which the writer repeatedly expressed to me, or with his desire that justice should be done to the character of that nobleman.

Remarks on conduct of Lord Althorp and of Mr. Littleton.

Mr. Littleton some years after the event, when taking a retrospective view of the political occurrences of this period* states, "I retain the strong opinion I felt at the time, that Lord Althorp should, consistently with his declared determination —which was the occasion of my communication to O'Connell—have compelled the omission of the clauses, or should *then* have tendered his resignation, and not when he did, which then had the effect, not of changing Earl Grey's mind, but of breaking up his Government."

In making this charge of inconsistency, Mr. Littleton must have been ignorant of the fact

"authority" gave him liberty to mention the fact that the clauses were still under consideration, but it went no further. Indeed he had been particularly warned against committing himself to Mr. O'Connell. He insists that Lord Althorp ought to have compelled the omission of the clauses on their rejection by Lord Grey, or to have at once tendered his resignation; so I presume that he was ignorant of the fact that this was in effect what Lord Althorp had done, and that it failed in changing Lord Grey's mind, and if persisted in the only effect would have been to break up the Government, which unquestionably was not the object of Mr. Littleton, and still less of his friend Lord Wellesley. I must add that when all the circumstances were fresh in his recollection, he writes to Lord Wellesley: "The public understanding of what passed in July, 1834, requires no correction. Whatever imprudence was committed was mine and Brougham's" (9th Feb., 1836).—(Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 114).—AUTHOR.

* Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 20.

1834. Æt. 52.

already mentioned* viz., that Lord Althorp did write to Lord Grey on the evening of the 29th of June, declining to move the clauses in the House of Commons, and eventually yielded only to Lord Grey's urgent representations.

This concession was the only course open to Lord Althorp; he would not have been justified in persisting in his intention to resign against the remonstrances of the Premier when the main reason for that resolution, Lord Wellesley's letter, was deprived of its force by comparison with all his previous despatches.

It cannot be maintained that Lord Althorp was bound on public grounds to retire from the Government, except on the assumption that Mr. Littleton had his authority for *the* statement which he made to Mr. O'Connell.† That Lord Althorp fully acquiesced in *a* communication being made is denied by no one, and if that communication and no other had been made, the mischief would never have ensued. But unhappily Mr. Littleton did not simply go further‡ than was intended, but stated what he had no authority whatever to state, viz.: Lord Althorp's intentions as to his own course if the clauses were retained.§

* See p. 498.

† "Edinburgh Review," v. cxxxiii., p. 313.—EDITOR.

‡ See p. 505, *note*.

§ The same misconception and the same anxiety to shield Mr. Littleton occur in a note to the Greville Memoirs, v. iii., p. 103, where the editor accuses Lord Althorp of being a party to *the* communication made by Mr. Littleton to Mr. O'Connell, a belief not concurred in by the author of the Memoirs himself, who seems to have grasped the

When Lord Althorp no longer felt himself free to persist in his opposition to the clauses, it can never be contended that he was bound to sacrifice the Ministry from a sense of personal obligation to Mr. Littleton. To maintain the existence of such an obligation, would be to maintain the doctrine that a Minister who so far relies on the discretion of a subordinate as to acquaint him with his intentions regarding a question which the subordinate knows is yet to be decided by the Cabinet, is bound to carry out those intentions, although subsequent information or altered circumstances dictate a different policy. 1834. Æt. 52.

There is nowhere a shadow of a suggestion, either then or at any later time, that Lord Althorp would have clung to office for a single day, had a sense of honour—and no man was more susceptible of such an influence—pointed to resignation; the whole of his political career is an answer to such a supposition. His contemporary, Lord J. Russell, writes,* "One of the Ministers who had seceded on the question of the Irish Church said to me, that if he had been told that Lord Althorp had engaged in an intrigue in order to get out of office, he might have believed it; but an assertion that Lord Althorp had intrigued in order to remain in office was utterly incredible;" and this is, I believe, an expression

circumstances of the case very clearly, though as regards some of the actual dates of the occurrences incorrectly.—EDITOR.

* "Earl Russell's Recollections and Suggestions, 1813–1873," p. 129.

1834. Æt. 52.

of the opinion entertained by all, irrespective of party.*

These events, however, are rapidly becoming a matter of history, as the men who took an active part in those struggles one by one pass away; what their opinion was has been already stated, and I do not think that future writers will set aside their verdict.

Address to Lord Althorp.

The impression on Lord Althorp's mind (as shown in his letter to Lord Grey), that he had fallen in the estimation of the House, soon proved to be unfounded. Before the expiration of the week, an Address was presented to him signed by two hundred and six members of all shades of the Liberal party,† conveying in unequivocal terms their deep regret at his retirement, and the assurance of their best support in the event of his returning to office. Many members, who only heard of the Address after it had been presented, expressed their entire concurrence in it. Such a testimony of public approval would have been less regarded by Lord Althorp had it been given during the excitement of the Reform Bill; but a large number of the signatures were those of members

* At the time when the fate of the Government was uncertain, I was going with a friend to the House of Commons, and seeing Lord Althorp walking in front with a very depressed expression, said to my companion, "I see the Goverment are still in," and, on being asked the reason for my assertion, I replied, "Because Lord Althorp looks so unhappy,—the Government cannot be going out," a prophecy which was afterwards verified.—LORD BELPER.

† The address and signatures are given in Appendix II. to this work.

who had not been in the former Parliament, and, as has been already mentioned, prided themselves on their freedom from party ties and their thorough independence. 1834. Æt. 52.

Some passages from the letters of Lord Essex, who was in constant communication with Lord Spencer, vividly express the opinion generally prevailing at the moment:

*July* 11*th.* "You will of course hear full particulars of all that has passed since Grey's touching speech, and Althorp's honest and simple straightforward narrative. Surely he might take the Premiership, if only for the end of the Session? it seems to be every one's wish, yet I fear he will not consent. What a speech of the Duke of Wellington! the Chancellor's excellent . . . . . I do trust that Althorp may be persuaded to remain; everyone is crying out for his doing so, and all will be right if he will. .

*July* 18*th.* "I did not write yesterday, because nothing was known, but I take for granted you were apprised of all that had occurred. What an angel is your son! He has saved his King and his country, by sacrificing all his own feelings for the public good, and he must reap the reward such conduct deserves from a generous people! Lady Grey said to me yesterday morning, 'Of all the persons now to be admired in this world, is Lord Althorp; never was anything like it!' This is the general feeling. The Tories are frantic.

*July* 24*th.* "I have not written, for alas! what can I say? the whole of the late proceedings have been of a nature so hurtful to my feelings, that I cannot view them with any degree of satisfaction, beyond the full conviction that there is but *one* opinion as to the rectitude, propriety, and perfect conduct of Althorp. This is deeply felt, I know, and by none more than by Grey and Lady Grey."

1834. Æt. 52.

Lord Melbourne becomes Premier.

The retirement of Lord Grey was naturally expected to be followed by the dissolution of the Whig party, of which he had been so long the head, and, I must add, the chief ornament. This was prevented mainly by the exertions and energy of the Lord Chancellor, who worked on the fears of the King by representing the risk that would attend the accession of the Tories to office, in the face of a large majority of Whigs, and he prevailed on His Majesty to send for Lord Melbourne; but Lord Melbourne made a condition which at first seemed fatal—the return of Lord Althorp. The King acquiesced, and, urged by his personal application, Lord Grey himself added his influence and entreaties. It was the appeal from so many quarters, added to his own sense of duty, that made Lord Althorp at last refer the question to three of his intimate friends, Lord Ebrington, Lord Tavistock, and Mr. Bonham Carter. Their answer was that, if the clauses in the Coercion Bill to which Lord Althorp had objected were abandoned by the new Government, he had no alternative that would justify him before the public in refusing to accede to Lord Melbourne's proposal.

Lord Althorp and Mr. Littleton return to office.

He most reluctantly yielded to these arguments, insisting, however, that Lord Grey's full approbation was indispensable before he gave an answer of acceptance. Lord Grey at once expressed his approbation in the most unqualified terms. Lord Althorp accordingly gave way, only requiring that Mr. Littleton should return to office, which Mr.

Littleton describes as a noble act, dictated by a fine sense of honour, and wholly unexpected by him.* 1834. Æt. 52.

Lord Althorp having thus resumed his office, to the general satisfaction of the Liberal Party, had no difficulty in carrying the Coercion Bill in the form for which he had contended originally in the Cabinet. Coercion Bill carried.

No bad effects followed in Ireland from the concession thus made to Mr. O'Connell, neither, I am bound to add, were his party propitiated by it. Their relations with the Government remained most unsatisfactory. The leadership of the House continued at least as difficult as before; though the confidence of the Whigs in Lord Althorp secured the Ministry against any attempts at removing them from power. On the 12th of August the Prorogation gave no unwelcome interruption to their labours. Prorogation of Parliament.

During the last month of the Session, Lord Althorp's troubles had been seriously increased by the illness of his father, which began to assume a most alarming character. Lord Spencer had now reached the venerable age of seventy-six. His infirmities required the diligent attention of an able physician,† whom Lord Althorp attached to his establishment, and by whose skill and timely interposition his life was certainly prolonged. He often resided at his marine villa near Ryde, in the Isle

* Lord Hatherton's Memoir, p. 25.

† Dr. Calvert.—Lord Lyttelton.

1834. Æt. 52.

of Wight, for the benefit of the sea air, and he there exercised a generous hospitality to his numerous naval connections, for attachment to the profession and pride in its achievements were among the main features of his character. Though frequently disqualified, by gout, from active exertions, his mind was still equal to the enjoyment of his literary tastes, and to a deep interest in politics. Lord Althorp kept him constantly informed of all that was going on, and the following letter from the father to the son that I find among the family papers, shows the happy terms on which they lived to the last.

"ALTHORP, *July 18th*, 1834.

"DEAR JACK,

"I cannot let the post go without expressing some parts of my feelings on the arrival of a pause (not to be sure a resting-place) in your late labours, and above all, in returning you my most sincere and cordial thanks for the truly kind, candid, and frank picture of your own progress through difficulties and embarrassments such as I should suppose no statesman who wished to act a truly honest and simple part ever encountered. That many have arisen who were skilful in steering through the rocks and shallows of political intrigues and manœuvres, our history of the last two centuries evidently proves; but so steady (aye, steady) and honest a course as you have steered, I suspect, was never exhibited before. Stick to it without fear, but with immovable confidence on your own genuine judgment, and as it has hitherto preserved for you the applause of those who pretend to be friends, and the praise, however reluctant, of your adversaries, your discretion will, I trust, be

equal to resist any more open attacks, which will require a stouter armour. 1834. Æt. 52.

"God Almighty protect and guide you!

"Yours ever affectionately,

"SPENCER."

Lord Brougham's tour in Scotland.

Lord Althorp was able to carry on the Government through the autumn without any new complications arising, though amidst some vexations, as the Lord Chancellor devoted a portion of his vacation to a tour in Scotland, where his unquiet spirit found vent in a series of addresses to the inhabitants, which on more than one occasion caused embarrassment to his colleagues and annoyance to the King,* who, though personally much attached to Lord Althorp, had formed a very unfavourable impression of the power of the Ministry to carry on the Government of the country; and the difficulties of the last Session had naturally not contributed to place them in a better light.

Death of Lord Spencer.

Whether the Cabinet would long have survived another meeting of Parliament it is impossible to say; but, during the recess, an event occurred by which the position of parties was materially changed. As the winter approached, Lord Spencer, whose health had continued to decline, was attacked by illness of a still more serious character; and, after lingering a short time, expired at Althorp on the 10th of November.

Great hopes were entertained that the event

* See "Lives of the Chancellors by Lord Campbell," v. viii., p. 453. —EDITOR.

1834. Æt 52. which removed Lord Althorp from the House of Commons would not also lead to his withdrawal from the Government, still less from political life. Lord Melbourne wrote to him in the most affectionate terms, and a letter from Mr. Charles Wood* shortly afterwards showed how unanimous was the feeling of the Liberal party on this point.

"DOWNING STREET, *November 11th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"I would not intrude upon you, whilst you must be under the impression of the recent melancholy event, of which I know that frequent anticipation and expectation does not diminish the force, if I did not fear that you might perhaps omit to write to the King upon the subject. I have kept him day by day informed of your father's state, and he has continually expressed the most lively interest and concern. I am anxious, therefore, that he should hear from yourself without delay, and if, as is most probable, you have already done this, I am sure you will forgive my interference.

"I have not forgotten your letter to me, when the recent Government was formed, with respect to your conduct in case of that event occurring which has now taken place. I say nothing at present except that I trust that you will not come to any hasty, unalterable determination; particularly in the frame of mind which is produced by such scenes as those which you have been recently contemplating. I hope also that you will not suffer yourself to be influenced by any indiscreet communications which you may receive from any other quarter. I do not know of any such, but I think them not improbable.

"Believe me,
"My dear Althorp,
"Yours faithfully,
"MELBOURNE."

* Now Viscount Halifax.

1834.
Æt. 52.

"TREASURY, *November 14th*, 1834.

"DEAR LORD SPENCER,

"I do not know that I ought to write to you at all, and still less that what I say will have any weight; but that I may not omit to do anything I can to contribute to what seems to me an important end, I cannot refrain from pressing upon you that you should continue to form part of the Liberal Government which is to go on. I need not say what a different position it will occupy with or without you amongst its leaders; but I must beg you to consider in how different a position all those will feel themselves who look up to yourself as their natural leader. We all feel safe and right as long as you are a member of the Government; but so chief a stone being left out of the wall would shake the whole fabric.

"I will not say more, because I am sure you will have all that can be said urged upon you more strongly than I can do it; but every expression of what is a general feeling adds weight to it, and I speak most feelingly in urging you, for the sake of your friends and followers, not to leave them headless.

"Yours very truly,

"C. WOOD."

Owing to Lord Althorp's accession to the Earldom, the post of leader of the House of Commons had to be filled at once—not an easy task when the discordant elements of which that body was composed are considered—and Lord Melbourne lost no time in going to Brighton to wait upon the King to receive his commands. It is believed that Lord Melbourne suggested three very able statesmen, one of whom the King might choose as leader of the House of Commons, it being generally supposed

1834. Æt. 52.

The King dismisses the Government.

that Lord John Russell was the most acceptable to the Cabinet. The King however had other views, and eagerly seized the opportunity to break up the Government; in fact, he made Lord Melbourne the bearer to London of a communication sending for the Duke of Wellington.

That this sudden collapse of the fabric which had with such difficulty been repaired in the summer astounded all the party, is so well known, that I need hardly dwell on the surprise which the determination of the King excited. The Ministry had finished the Session without new difficulties, and during the Recess they had not been guilty of any mal-administration which could account for such an immediate downfall following so closely on the death of Lord Spencer. How little this blow had been anticipated by the leading Whig statesmen, is manifest from their correspondence on the occasion.

"PAVILION, BRIGHTON, *November 14th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"I came down here yesterday, in order to converse with the King upon the present state of affairs, and after two very full and unreserved communications, he has determined that the present Government is so weak in the House of Lords, and now so much weakened in the House of Commons, that it cannot go on advantageously: that therefore he will not direct me to make the announcement rendered necessary by the recent event, but will send for the Duke of Wellington. The various reasons for this determination will present themselves to your mind, and I apprehend you will not much lament it, as it both relieves you from any further annoyance, and also falls in with that

which was your opinion, viz., that it would be better that the Tories should make one more effort to form a Government. Whether the King's decision be wise or not, I am convinced that it has been come to conscientiously, and upon his own conviction, and not in consequence of any other advice or influence whatsoever.

"Yours faithfully,

"MELBOURNE."

"WHITEHALL, *November 15th*, 1834.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"It turns out after all that the King's reliance upon you was his only reason for supporting the Ministry. In point of fact, I imagine that he has been told that now you have left the House of Commons the Tories can form a Government. A truer adviser would have told him that you had immense influence in checking the House of Commons, but that your influence was never required to spur them on. I suppose everything is for the best in this world, otherwise the only good I should see in this event would be that it saves me from being sadly pummelled by Peel and Stanley, to say nothing of O'Connell.

"We leave office quite united in principle and opinion.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"J. RUSSELL."

THE LORD CHANCELLOR TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

"SATURDAY.

"MY DEAR ALTHORP,

"What you and I thought, and all men of sound minds thought, quite impossible, is come to pass, and because—and only because—you are removed from the House of Commons, the King *turns us all out!*—a thing never

1834. Æt. 52.

before done—and without waiting for the House of Commons to express its distrust in John Russell or in us. So that Wellington has not now to come in because we have broken up and left the country without a Government, but he comes in because he expects the House of Commons and the country prefer the Tories to us! It seems incredible, but he will be goaded on by his hungry creatures to try this desperate experiment, which means two dissolutions if it fails, and a Radical Government.

"*Your* case is now clear, but you will violate every duty to your friends and the country if you think of anything like withdrawing from politics. *Your duty* is to stand by the country, and your retiring would enable the Tories to misgovern us again, much more than all else.

"I have written to the King to throw all the consequences on him and relieve myself.

"Yours ever,

"H. B."

The feeling of vexation expressed in this letter was not confined to the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Althorp had additional cause for annoyance in the conviction that the King had used his elevation to the Peerage as a reason for dismissing the Ministry. That it was merely a pretext many circumstances combined to prove, nor was this ever doubted by Lord Althorp, who felt some indignation at the use made by the King of his name to cover an attack on his colleagues and supporters.

Lord Althorp's final retirement from office.

If he ever subsequently attended the Court, it could only have been to give up his seals of office. He considered his official career as ended, and could never be prevailed upon to take part in any Administration afterwards.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

RETIREMENT OF LORD ALTHORP FROM POLITICAL LIFE—THE ELECTION OF THE SPEAKER—ENTREATIES TO TAKE OFFICE—THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY—CORRESPONDENCE WITH LORD BROUGHAM—OFFER OF THE LORD LIEUTENANCY OF IRELAND—SPEECHES IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND AT NORTHAMPTON—ILLNESS AND DEATH—CHARACTER.

1834. Æt. 52.

Retirement of Lord Althorp from political life.

Lord Althorp returned to private life with unmixed satisfaction.* It had long been his earnest wish and desire. "You must be aware," he said once before in a letter to Lord Brougham, "that my being in office is nothing more or less than misery to me. I am perfectly sure that no man ever disliked it to such a degree as I do; and, indeed, the first thing that usually comes into my head when I wake is how I am to get out of it." On his way into the House of Commons, to make his statement preparatory to his resignation (on the breaking up of Lord Grey's Ministry), his countenace suddenly brightened. He was overheard to exclaim "Well, there is heaven beyond." It has been already seen with what unwillingness he

* He told my father it was the cessation of acute pain to him.—Lord Lyttelton.

1834. Æt. 52. yielded to the solicitations of his colleagues and the rest of his party to accept office under Lord Melbourne.

Having paid the last solemn duties to his father, whose remains were deposited in the family burying-place at Brington, the parish church near Althorp, Lord Spencer sat down to look into the state of his affairs. He was prepared to find them in some disorder, as he knew his father, although a very large landed proprietor, had, during many years, lived far beyond his income. Indeed, he had once talked to his son of the necessity of retrenchment in expenditure, and went so far as to propose large reductions in their establishment. Lord Althorp replied that this would make his mother miserable. "Continue to live," he added, as you have been accustomed. Let the task of retrenchment fall upon me. I have no desire to keep up the state of a great nobleman, and shall be prepared to live very economically until the mortgages you have contracted can be discharged."

It now appeared, even on a brief inquiry, that his father had acted so literally on this assurance by burthening the estate with a succession of heavy charges, that the interest on them, added to the expenses of keeping up the great establishments at Althorp and Wimbledon together with Spencer House, nearly absorbed the rental; and Lord Spencer, to use his own words, "could only regard himself as the nominal owner of his patrimony." Great as was his surprise at this discovery, it never elicited

from him a word of complaint. He continued to regard his father's memory with the most devoted veneration and attachment, whilst all objects became secondary in his eyes to the restoration of the fortunes of the family. This, however, was a task that met with many troublesome and serious interruptions, even at the outset. 1835. Æt. 53.

The dissolution which had quickly followed the change of Ministry had brought with it a severe conflict in Northamptonshire, and he was unavoidably drawn into an active support of the Liberal candidates, and had the mortification of witnessing their defeat. Next came the question of the Speakership, on which his opinion was sought not only by several of his former colleagues, but by other members of the party. Mr. Hume, who, though considering himself an independent supporter of the Grey Ministry, had frequently and harshly commented on their policy and measures, addressed him a letter asking his advice and assistance in favour of the nomination of Mr. Abercromby for the Chair, and urged his taking an active part in the proceedings of the Liberals at the opening of the Session. This letter is here given on account of the reply, which is the first announcement that I can find of Lord Spencer's intention of withdrawing from politics.* The election of the Speaker.

* This letter is the more remarkable from Mr. Hume's not having previously communicated with Lord Spencer, who, I may observe, had been sounded by one of the late Government on the subject, and had discouraged the measure. Mr. Hume had not forgotten the preference

1835.
Æt. 53.

## MR. JOSEPH HUME TO EARL SPENCER.

"Bryanston Square, *January 28th*, 1835.

"My Lord,

"I am well aware of your love of country life, and the desire to avoid political contest. But there are times, and the present seems to me to be the time, when your wishes must in some measure yield to necessity, and you must come forward to aid the cause of Reform, with which your name and character are identified.

"The state of the Tory Administration, by the great support they have received from the rotten Corporations (which were allowed to remain in all their strength, and with increased vigour to put off the day of their reform), renders the utmost energy, and the best concert, of the friends of popular government, necessary to secure to the people the benefit expected from the Reform Bill.

"Not a day should be lost in showing to the King and to the Tory Administration their inferiority of numbers, and that the people have, on the appeal, decided against them; and measures should be adopted to elect a Speaker, selected and nominated by the Reformers, instead of allowing Sir C. Manners Sutton, one of the most determined Tories in the kingdom, to take the Chair of the *Second* Reform Parliament.

"I therefore have to entreat you to come up to London as quickly as possible, and with Lord Melbourne, and the new Members of Parliament, and all interested in a change of the present Government, to concert the best measures for choosing the proper candidate, and then for securing his election. If no efficient opposition should be made against Sir C. M. Sutton, it will be taken as a tacit avowal of the weakness and want of union of the Reformers, and will have the worst effect in all future acts of theirs.

given by Lord Grey's Ministry to Mr. Manners Sutton, of which he spoke to me at the time with some bitterness.—Author.

"I consider that Mr. Abercromby is the man for the Speaker, and by proper arrangements he will accept the office, and may be elected to it; but it requires the cordial and the speedy co-operation of every Member of the late Government and of every Reformer to do so. 1835. Æt. 53.

"If in July last I deemed your continuance in office essential to the progress of Reform and of good government, and therefore made that request to you with so large a proportion of the members of the late House, with which you complied, as I think so usefully to the service of the public, I consider the present crisis of much more importance, and therefore frankly and freely make the appeal I now do to your public feeling for the cause of Reform.

"I think I speak the sentiments of a large portion of your old and new political friends, and I entreat you, with as little delay as possible, to concede the request I now make.

"I shall be pleased to hear from your Lordship, and remain,

"Your obedient servant,

"JOSEPH HUME."

EARL SPENCER TO JOSEPH HUME, ESQ.

"WISETON, *January* 31*st*, 1835.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"The receiving such a letter from you as I have this day received cannot but be very flattering to me. Because, although I hope and am sure nothing ever occurred which at all diminished our mutual feelings of private good will, yet certainly I could not presume that during the time I was in office, I possessed generally your political confidence. With respect to the request contained in your letter that I should immediately come up to town, I do not think my duty im-

1835. Æt. 53.

peratively calls upon me to do so, and nothing short of what I believe to be an imperative duty will induce me again to engage in political life.

"The question of whether Sir Charles Sutton is to be elected Speaker without opposition or not appears to me to be one of policy. If the Liberal party in the House of Commons are confident that their opposition to his election will be successful, I should say certainly that it will be a very beneficial measure to oppose it. If on the contrary they are not confident they can succeed, as their failure would promote the cause of the Anti-Reformers, and as no question of principle is involved in the choice of the individual who is to fill the Chair, I think the attempt would be imprudent. I agree, however, with you in thinking that a very early opportunity should be taken to ascertain what the opinion of the new House of Commons is with respect to the Administration, and more particularly what their opinion is of the mode in which Lord Melbourne was dismissed. This will occur naturally when the Address is moved, and I should say an amendment ought then to be tried, whatever is the prospect of success.

"Believe me, my dear Sir,

"Yours most sincerely,

"SPENCER."

Lord Spencer urged by his friends to return to politics.

Lord Spencer must have had more difficulty in answering another letter of the same tenor which he received a few days later from one of his late colleagues, a nobleman whose sweetness of disposition, consistency of principle, and acknowledged ability gave him deserved weight among the Whigs. I shall only observe, that in refusing Lord Holland's appeal, Lord Spencer showed how improbable it

was that the resolution he had formed could be shaken. 1835. Æt. 53.

LORD HOLLAND TO EARL SPENCER.

"Dear Althorp,

"Is it possible you do not mean to come up to the meeting? I own I feel strongly that you ought; so strongly, indeed, that I cannot reconcile all silence upon it with friendly feelings to you. As to any determination you have adopted, or may adopt, of quitting politics altogether, however on public grounds I might lament it, it would be quite ridiculous in me, who am quitting them perforce very rapidly, to obtrude any opinion upon you—that is, in truth, a question on which a man must be at liberty to consult his own inclination, one on which he has not only a right, but is right in acting according to his own judgment in preference to any advice given by others; but I own the absenting yourself from such discussions as may, and probably will, arise on transactions in which you have recently borne so large a part in the ministerial changes of the last six or seven months, appears to me (exclusive of the constructions to which it is liable) to offer such an advantage to all who are disposed, or exposed, to misrepresent the views and conduct of your colleagues, that you are hardly justified in depriving them of the opportunity of appealing to your recollection and testimony. I feel it equally strongly on your own account, though I do not urge it so much, because I know, that even if just, it will not weigh with you so much as that of your friends. But if there be any disposition (and there was some last year in the Lords) to calumniate and arraign your motives and conduct on Grey's retirement, would it be to your advantage or to your honour to be absent without any one assignable reason, and to leave the task of repelling insinuations to those who cannot give to your vindication that effect which plain exposition of a

1835. Æt. 53.

man's honest feelings, and especially your frank and rough way of expressing them, never fails to produce? I really think you owe, at least, this *extremum laborem** to your party, your colleagues, and more emphatically still to Grey, Melbourne, and yourself—Brougham, I believe, will be there. He will, if so, be the subject of much animadversion. I do not like to dwell on all the considerations that that circumstance suggests. It is, I feel, very painful, but it is, nevertheless, quite impossible not to acknowledge that his unscrupulous vehemence in repelling may require to the full as much check and chastisement from your presence as the unmeasured acrimony of his antagonists; and, recollect this, your presence alone, without a word, may prevent things being said which, if said in your absence, would render future attendance, explanation, and even controversy, unavoidable. Excuse me for saying so much; I really do so from anxiety to dissuade you from doing what I think will give you more pain than two or three days in the country can give you pleasure.

"Yours, &c.

"HOLLAND."

"WISETON, *February 9th*, 1835.

"MY DEAR LORD HOLLAND,

"If the question was merely as you state it whether I should remain a few days in the country, or pass those few days in town, there could be no doubt that if any one or two of my friends wished me to pass them in town, I ought to comply with their wishes. But it appears to me that there are more things involved in my attending or not attending in the House of Lords on the first day of the Session, than merely whether I shall be at that time in London or in the country. I have determined, for reasons which it is not necessary for me to state, to retire from public life, I say it is unnecessary for me to state those

* Virg. Ecl. x. 1.

reasons, because you admit what many people deny—that I have a right to decide whether I will continue in public life or not for myself. This is known to some few of my friends with whom I have happened to communicate, and, perhaps, to some one or two others, but the public generally are not at all aware of it, and, on the contrary, unless people deceive me for the purposes of flattering very much, a great many of the Liberal party are looking to me not only as their leader out of office, but expecting me to take office when it shall be offered me on Liberal principles; this being the case, I think it my duty to take every step in my power to undeceive the public, certainly to take none which would have a tendency to confirm them in their mistake. It may be possible that my non-attendance at the commencement of the Sessions is a stronger indication of my intentions than it is necessary for me to make, but this is an error on the right side. It is also possible that I am deceived as to the light in which I am looked upon by the public, and that those who have come about me have exaggerated very much my importance in order to flatter my vanity, and to give me pleasure; but again supposing this should be so, then my attendance or non-attendance will be a matter of indifference just in the proportion in which my importance ought to be lessened. If, again, my absence could by possibility injure any individual, it might be questionable whether I ought not to attend and take some other means of showing it to be my intention to retire from politics, but I really cannot see how anybody can be injured by my absence. The only change of Administration which can come much under discussion is Melbourne's dismissal; now I was very little concerned in that, and could answer no appeal upon it, but one which it would be better I should not answer, and that is, if I was appealed to to know whether I would have accepted office again had the Ministry continued. I must answer that I had told Melbourne I would not, I quite admit, however, that he had a fair right to say that he did not consider this answer final. I do not deny that my absence may expose me at first to miscon-

1835. Æt. 53.

1835. Æt. 53.

struction. I have very little doubt it will expose me to severe attack, because the Liberal party, for whom I slaved for the last sixteen years, will be very angry with me for declining to go on slaving for them any longer; this would, however, be only postponed for a very short time by my appearance the first day. If a change of Administration is produced by the first movements of the House of Commons, as I think it probably will, and I refuse to take office, or if, having been present at first, I went away, the attack upon me would be just the same. To this attack I must make up my mind unless I am ready to sacrifice the happiness of the rest of my life, and to involve myself in inextricable pecuniary difficulties. I am very much obliged to you for writing to me openly and frankly your opinion, and I have now told you in answer the reason which has decided me not to go up to the meeting of Parliament. It appears to be one which ought to guide my conduct, assuming that I act upon my determination of retiring from public life.

"Believe me,

"Yours most truly,

"SPENCER."

Mr. Abercromby elected Speaker.

Mr. Abercomby was elected, but not by so large a majority as to encourage a hostile amendment to the Address, in the terms that Lord Spencer had suggested. It was considered prudent to confine it to an assertion of the Reform principles of the late Ministry. This however answered its object, for it drew forth a discussion of the grounds of Lord Melbourne's dismissal, which Sir Robert Peel skilfully defended on the authority and express acknowledgement of Lord Grey that he could not carry on

the Government without Lord Althorp, an argument which told powerfully on the House, supported as it was by the difficulty of disputing the exercise of the Royal Prerogative. With the same tact and judgment Sir Robert Peel managed to dispose of other questions which the Whigs had expected to be fatal to his Government, and in all these debates he gained so decidedly on the favour of the House, that one of the most distinguished members of the Opposition told me that, but for the Appropriation Clause, he would have kept his ground. He is supposed not to have been sorry to be beaten on Lord Howick's amendment, and he perhaps believed the triumph of the Whigs on his retirement would be short lived.

1835. Æt. 53.

The important intelligence of the Ministerial defeat was thus communicated to Lord Spencer by Lord Tavistock.

Dissolution of the Tory Government.

"Brooks's, 6 *o'clock.*

"Well!—They are all out! I suppose our friends will send for you. Whether you will be able to resist I know not; but you must recollect that if you were again to take office, the work would be easy compared with that which gave you so much misery before. I am sure that your coming up would be of great advantage to your party, but, on the other hand, your health and happiness must be put into the scale.

"Yours ever,

"T.

"Thanks for your liberality to the Steventon people."

1835. Æt. 53. This letter was quickly followed by one from Lord Melbourne.

"My dear Spencer,

"I am told that after the course which we have taken it is impossible that we should refuse office, notwithstanding the great and almost insurmountable difficulties which oppose themselves to the formation of an efficient or satisfactory Administration, but in compliance with the general opinion and demand made upon me I have in obedience to the King's commands undertaken to attempt to lay before him the scheme of a Government. I have hitherto abstained from troubling you on public affairs, but in this moment of embarrassment and crisis I think it my duty to ask you for your assistance. You must feel that everything is at stake, that we have fearful odds to bear up against, the inclination of the King, the House of Lords, three-fourths at least of the gentlemen of the country, and such a preponderant number of the clergy as may be fairly called the whole of them, and if this attempt on the part of the Whig and Liberal party should fail, that party will most probably sink into insignificance, or be only able to aspire to a share of power in conjunction with, or probably in subordination to, its opponents. You know how much you are looked up to by that party, and what courage you would infuse into them, if they could see you again in their ranks and making common cause with them. I would not ask or wish, if you dislike it, to impose upon you an office of heavy labour, but your countenance and authority in any situation would be of inestimable value. It is unnecessary for me to expatiate upon the strong motives, which, as it appears to me, ought to actuate you on such an occasion. They must already have presented themselves to your mind, and if they are insufficient nothing I can say can add to their force. I only say again that I consider it my duty to attempt to obtain your

assistance; whether it is yours to give it is for yourself to determine. 1835. Æt. 53.

"Believe me, my dear Spencer,

"Yours faithfully,

"MELBOURNE."

Refusal of Lord Spencer to take office.

Lord Spencer's answer was, it is believed, quite as decided a negative as that which he had addressed to Lord Holland.

No persuasion could avail to bring him back to face the troubles of official life,* yet he still maintained much interest in the formation of the new Government, though absolutely refusing to interfere in the distribution of any of the important posts in it. Thus he writes to Mr. Spring Rice :—

EARL SPENCER TO THE RT. HON. T. SPRING RICE.

"ALTHORP.

"MY DEAR RICE,

"I send you a letter I have received from——. You know the history of his removal, and were just as much concerned in it as I was. I shall write to him to tell him what I have done, but saying that as I have declined to ask any favours even for my nearest friends and relations, I must decline asking a favour for him. If I was to ask for anything it would indeed be an outrage. I refused when asked by you, and therefore I will never torment any of you. I made an exception, as I told you before, in the case of

* I have heard that Lieut. Drummond was sent down to Althorp to try to induce Lord Spencer to return to office. He found him sitting at the open window, looking out at the sheep and young lambs, and he protested nothing should induce him to leave them.—EDITOR.

1835. Æt. 53.

Drummond,* and I am delighted to see his appointment. I am delighted for his own sake, but also because I think it impossible for you to have selected so good a man for the place; he has in addition to the first class of abilities a perfect temper (I have known this from having lived in the same house for three years), and one of the most honourable and conscientious minds I ever met with. Both these last are inestimable in Ireland.

"I am very glad to see you going on so well; Stanley and you will and must be two; it was clearly unavoidable, but it will not do you much harm. I was always sure you would do quite as well without me as with me, and it is a great satisfaction to me to see that I was right, and that I may enjoy happiness without anyone being injured by it.

"Yours most truly,

"SPENCER."

The decision of the new Premier to withhold the Great Seal from Lord Brougham gave Lord Spencer much pain, and in a letter commenting on the Ministerial appointments he alludes somewhat sorrowfully to the circumstance.

EARL SPENCER TO THE RT. HON. T. SPRING RICE.

"ALTHORP.

"MY DEAR RICE,

"Many thanks for your letter. I was beginning to fear that there was some greater hitch in your proceedings than I had anticipated there could be; if there was I am very glad it is so well got over. I like the Ministry and the cast

* Lieutenant Drummond, R.E., some time private secretary to Lord Spencer, afterwards under-secretary in Ireland, a man of much ability; he died early, universally beloved and esteemed—by no one more than by the author of this work.—EDITOR.

of the party very much, I most particularly like the Irish arrangement. 1835. Æt. 53.

"I suppose, I must say, I believe you right, but I cannot but be grievously sorry for poor Brougham. I see, of course, his glaring defects. I know the mischief those defects are calculated to do to himself and to everyone with whom he is acting, but still I have worked with him for so many years,* and have at different times lived on such intimate terms with him that I must lament though I by no means censure, his being thrown overboard, when I fear there is no whale ready to receive him, and after a limited time to replace him on dry land.

"Duncannon has three proxies of mine—they may be entered in anybody's name Melbourne likes best.

"Yours most truly,

"SPENCER."

During the interval which had elapsed since his father's death, Lord Spencer had become still more and more convinced of the necessity for the course which he had taken. He now began to make arrangements for disposing of such parts of his property as could be sold to most advantage, especially those in the neighbourhood of London, not even retaining the beautiful park of Wimbledon. He also submitted to a still greater sacrifice, by the exercise of strict frugality in his expenditure. Thus he broke up the establishment at Althorp, not only by dismissing a large number of useless dependents,

* In the very interesting sketch by Mr. Roebuck, which will be found in the Appendix to the first volume of his "History of the Whig Ministry of 1830," it will be seen how cordial and united had been the co-operation of Lord Spencer with Lord Brougham, when in Opposition during former times.—EDITOR.

1835. Æt. 53.

but by utilising the park which had long been a heavy expense. The deer were distributed among his friends, and the garden was handed over* to the gardener, who had no difficulty in maintaining it by the sale of the produce in the London market, Lord Spencer being his customer whilst residing at the Hall, a luxury which he said he could afford for but a few weeks in the year. Some rooms only were reserved for his use and that of his near relatives at this time. Spencer House, so long the scene of a refined and generous hospitality, was virtually closed, Lord Spencer passed very little of his time in London, and then gave no dinners. In these necessary arrangements he derived great benefit from the assistance of Mr. (now Sir John) Shaw Lefevre, who in early life had been Auditor to his father, the late Lord Spencer, and who was deeply impressed by the cheerfulness with which he made these sacrifices. Indeed, Sir John has often observed to me, that he considered self-denial the most remarkable feature in his character. He lived principally at Wiseton, the one place to which his economy did not extend, for no expense was spared in keeping up the farm and especially all that related to the cattle, as he prided himself on maintaining the excellence of his shorthorns, and in keeping pace with all the most important agricultural improvements of the day. At no time, even when Chancellor of the Exchequer, did his interest

* It was let to him by Lord Spencer.—Lord Lyttelton.

in this part of his establishment materially languish. One day when we were talking together of the influence of early acquired tastes on the mind when it seemed engrossed by objects of a more exciting character, I mentioned the old story that the first letter Sir Robert Walpole, at the time he was Prime Minister, used to open on receiving the morning's post was always the one from his Norfolk gamekeeper. Lord Althorp smiled, and said that he paid the letters from his bailiff at Wiseton the same compliment. I recollect one Easter vacation when he was utterly exhausted by fatigue in the debates on the Reform Bill, and his physician had prescribed his immediate departure to Nottinghamshire, I saw him just before he left town looking so wretchedly ill and depressed, that I called a few days after, anxious to learn what accounts had been received of him; his secretary, Lieutenant Drummond, with a smile, put into my hands the following letter:

1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

"DEAR DRUMMOND,

"I bore the journey well, and already feel much better. I am just returned from seeing the finest yearling ox I ever saw in my life.

"Yours truly,

"ALTHORP."

He derived both pleasure and instruction from talking with the most intelligent of his farm people. An old shepherd at Althorp spoke of him to a

Interest in country pursuits at Althorp and Wiseton.

1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

friend of mine with enthusiasm. "Few persons," he said, "could compete with my Lord in knowledge of sheep." He described him as often sitting on the grass while the whole flock passed along by him, and he knew every sheep as well as "if he had lived with them." I believe, however, that he admitted the superiority of the flock of his friend the Duke of Richmond at Goodwood, but the Duke, on the other hand, yielded the palm to the bulls of Wiseton.*

The Royal Agricultural Society.

He took an active part in conjunction with the

* The interest which Lord Althorp took in farming, even at times when his attention might be supposed to be wholly engrossed by politics, may be illustrated by an anecdote belonging to the time of the Reform Bill. It must be premised that the disfranchisement of boroughs was in the first Reform Bill made to depend upon their falling short of a certain population. A suggestion having been made that the wealth of the boroughs ought also to be taken into account, it was determined, in preparing the second Reform Bill, that the question of disfranchisement should depend upon a joint ratio of the population of the borough and the amount of taxation paid by its inhabitants. The mode in which a list of boroughs should be arranged with reference to this joint ratio, was referred to Lieutenant Drummond, R.E., who was at the time Lord Althorp's private secretary, and was known as a man of high scientific attainment; and the system which he proposed and which was adopted by the Government, was afterwards known as "Lieutenant Drummond's Scale."

It happened that, about the time of the hottest contests on the Reform Bill, Lord Althorp had occasion to receive at his office in Downing Street a deputation of Scotch members and others, amongst whom was Mr. T. F. Kennedy, then M.P. for Ayr (now the Right Hon. T. F. Kennedy), who was an intimate friend of Lord Althorp, and like him much interested in agricultural pursuits. When the deputation was leaving the room on the conclusion of their business, Lord Althorp called Mr. Kennedy back and said, "I want to tell you what I have been doing. I have been applying Drummond's Scale to my sheep;" and he then produced a list of sheep carefully arranged in order according to a calculation founded on the joint ratio of some two qualities of the animal which he considered of primary importance. (*Ex rel.* Mr. T. F. Kennedy.)—LORD BELPER.

Duke in originating the Royal Agricultural Society, to whose Transactions he contributed several papers, chiefly on his favourite subject of the breeding and care of cattle; but he also sent one of a more miscellaneous character, giving a description of Holkham, and the improvement effected there during a long series of years by his friend Lord Leicester, which is both interesting and instructive. 1835-45. Æt. 53-63. The Royal Agricultural Society.

The following letter was addressed to me by an accomplished lady, Mrs. Geo. Butler, whose father, Mr. Grey of Dilston, a very well-known agriculturist, was an old friend of Lord Spencer, and shared his passion for the improvement of cattle, and indeed for all matters connected with agricultural progress.

"Sir,

"The letters I possess written by Lord Spencer to my father from 1820 to his death are almost entirely agricultural, and will, I fear, be of little use to you. They are characteristic as far as they go. I think I have about forty or fifty which were put in a packet, and labelled by my father 'Bulls.' They contain minute accounts of the merits of Hector, Duke, Rhadamanthus, Berwick, Flodden, regrets that a son of Duke should have been born with a spot on the left side of his nose, and that Flodden's progeny are not quite so straight in the back as their sire. Another large packet is marked 'Sheep.' Other letters are about agricultural implements, &c. A very few have postscripts, short and pithy, about the great affairs of the nation. In 1832 he wrote to my father, 'If once I get out of office they won't catch me again.' My father had a warm affection for Lord Spencer, and I think it was reciprocated, for it was scarcely possible not to love my father. They Correspondence on agricultural subjects.

1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

used to laugh very much when they were together, and were like two boys in their eagerness about their pet bulls and rams. But they had also a very much graver foundation of friendship. My father was a great agriculturist, and from the beginning of this century he set himself to the consideration of political economy, and especially of all such subjects as bear upon land and agriculture, the Corn Laws, the change in the Poor Laws, the Commutation of Tithes, the payment of labour, and last, not least, the general Reform of Parliament. My father was a free-trader from his earliest youth, and fought a long and tedious battle with his brother farmers on this head. He found in Lord Spencer's enlightened views on these subjects much ground for sympathy. It was not uninteresting to me to see these two country gentlemen so steadily going in advance of the great body of country gentlemen generally, and so heartily welcoming a better state of things when it came, though the change to a better system might be brought about by a statesman who, till the last, had been adverse to the right principle. I shall never forget my father's joy over Sir Robert Peel's conversion to free trade, and the generous view he at all times held of his character.

"Lord Spencer's intercourse with Papa was chiefly *viva voce* at Wiseton or Milfield Hall (my father's place on the border). They had a great correspondence about the beginning of the Royal Agricultural Society, which I am sorry to say is destroyed."

Philosophical studies.

In the beautiful dedication of his discourse on Natural Theology to Lord Spencer, Lord Brougham stated that Lord Spencer had not only devoted much of his time to such inquiries, and was beyond most men sensible of their importance, but had even formed the design of giving to the world his thoughts on the subject. I doubt whether Lord Spencer had actually entertained the intention of

adding to the list of noble authors, but it is perfectly true that he did employ many of his leisure hours in philosophical inquiries. His correspondence with Lord Brougham on the subject would fill a volume, and although in the present advanced state of science it contains no novelties, it may be regarded as an interesting proof of a cultivated and well-regulated mind. Yet his private character requires no evidence to show his belief in Revelation;* indeed among his letters are two of great length, and showing considerable reflection, which, if space allowed, I would gladly quote. Their subjects are the Immateriality of the Soul, and the Inspiration of the Bible. Lord Glenelg told me that he had been much impressed by a prayer which Lord Spencer read in the family service at Althorp. It was particularly appropriate to domestic servants, a class which Lord Glenelg observed formed the largest portion of the attendants at family prayer, and yet were most overlooked in the composition of the prayers. Lord Spencer admitted the prayer to have been written by himself under that impression. 1835–45. ÆT. 53-63.

Lord Spencer still kept up his correspondence with some of his former colleagues, and among his papers are many letters from members of the late Cabinet. They mostly contain urgent entreaties to return to political life, and are unanimous in expressing how invaluable would be his assistance. His letters† too from Lord Brougham are very Correspondence with former colleagues.

* See p. 1 of Fragment at commencement of this work.—EDITOR.

† I have made the following extracts from some of the many letters

1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

numerous; many being on scientific subjects, and others containing complaints of the treatment which he had received on all sides. What his feelings were may best be judged from some of the extracts which will be found below. In one of the earlier ones the ex-Lord Chancellor writes:

"As for office, I have done with it. To be worried for years by the enemy, betrayed by the King, and then tried like a culprit on absurd charges out of newspapers by the party and colleagues I have ruined my fortunes for, and made myself a beggar for, is not suited *to my book*, I can assure you."

"Now what I wish to observe is this: If their plot to destroy me had by accident failed, and only ruined me, it is no reason why such tricks and such spite may not ruin another man—may ruin *me* another time. Ought I not to expose them in justice? Is it not my duty? I wait till this Session is over, and the work done; I also wait until I show that I have in no one *tittle* let my private quarrel interfere with my public duty. Really after all I have done these seven months, no one can complain of me on that score. I go on day after day defending them—their only speaker. I never even have had one civil word from one of them—not only not one acknowledgment in speeches, while they loudly praise any man who makes even a decent speech on the enemy's side. But I don't value their praise.

written at that period. No one could have regretted more than the author of this Memoir the temporary estrangement which arose between Lord Brougham and his old colleagues; in some cases, I fear, never entirely removed; but I am glad to say that the intimacy between Lord Brougham and my father was in later years renewed and continued unimpaired till the very last. He has often expressed to me his sorrow, remembering the splendid services rendered to the party by Lord Brougham, that such brilliant abilities and powerful eloquence should, after so short a tenure of office, have been lost to them for ever.—EDITOR.

NOT ONLY NOT ONE CHEER (there they sit dumb, while I am doing their work, which they can't do themselves) except from Holland, who cheers everybody, but what really is inconvenient, and hurts them as much as me, they never beforehand have even given me one hint of what they meant to do, though every clerk in the office knew it, and though they could only do it through me and my friends."

In another letter Lord Brougham wrote :

"You ought to recollect (and indeed I think you do generally, though every now and then you forget it) that in *your* situation there is as much public virtue and self-denial, and as high a duty in preventing whatever may put an end to the Government, as there is in most other men in sacrificing office and power.

"Recollect that seats in the House of Commons or peerages and seats in the odious House we are both doomed to, were not bestowed on us in order to write 'M.P.' after, or 'Lord' before our names. They import and impose *duties*. Lord Grey, to be sure, seems to think that all politics are only made to be an amusement or pastime for grown-up gentlemen. All old Whigs had a little of this; but, then, he is seventy-two, and you are little above fifty.

"You say you are not suited to the House of Lords—that they won't like you, &c., &c. Am I? Ten thousand times less. All of them abhor me—I don't know which side would give most to hear I was dead. I know the Whigs have repaid thirty years' devotion, and the loss (for *the* cause) of my seat, where I had power, by not only throwing me overboard the moment my back was turned, but by conspiring to assassinate my character in every foul way men could devise, when *not one of them* had the manliness to tell me up to this hour what I had done to displease them. All this I know—I know that I have been treated as no one man since the Athenian Republic ever yet was

1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

used; and that the poor creatures I allude to not having courage to murder me outright, have been trying (weakly, and in vain, I admit) to destroy my force and influence in the country—which has grown under these bitter attacks. Now all this would have given me a good ground of declaring off, and remaining at peace among my books, where I could have been happy, and also done service to mankind in my favourite pursuits. Yet I did not think *I was at liberty to do so.*"

Receives the offer of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.

The quietude of the retirement of Wiseton was again disturbed when the offer of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, or the Governorship of Canada, was made to Lord Spencer in November, 1838, in the letter which, with its answer, is here given. It is difficult to imagine an office where the duties would have been more repugnant to a man of his simple tastes, and no one could have felt this more deeply than he did himself. In Canada, on the other hand, he believed, and very properly, that he might be of use; and could he have been prevailed upon to undertake the government of that Colony, few can doubt that the experience he had acquired during his leadership of the House of Commons, in reconciling the conflicting elements which composed his own party in the first Reformed Parliament, coupled with his genial manners and sincerity, would have made his presence of extreme value. But he considered that the duties he was discharging at home, though not of course so ostentatious, were of some real use to himself and others.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE TO EARL SPENCER. 1835-45. Æt. 53-68.

"SOUTH STREET, *November 24th*, 1838.

"MY DEAR SPENCER,

"By my own sense of duty, and the unanimous instance of my colleagues, I am compelled, you will believe most reluctantly, to make another representation to you upon the state of public affairs, and the necessity of your lending the country some assistance in some shape or another. Great questions are going on both within and without, but they are going on well and favourably, and I do not believe that on the part of the bulk of the people there is any disposition to distrust or be dissatisfied with the Government. But we are put to the greatest difficulty for want of men of sufficient talent and character to fill the high and arduous situations which are becoming vacant, and to discharge their duties. It appears to be more prudent to leave the government of Canada for the present, at least, to Sir John Colborne, especially as there is apprehension of renewed rebellion: but this is a state of things which cannot last long. We must without much delay determine upon a Civil Governor, to be sent out with the same, or larger, powers than were given to Durham, and with the same view, namely, that of establishing in those provinces some form of government which will be satisfactory to the inhabitants, and likely to retain them in their connection with Great Britain. When I talked to you upon this matter at Windsor you did not seem to be so entirely averse from the undertaking as I had expected. I admitted the justice of the grounds upon which you made your decision; but if you should be inclined to reconsider it, I can only say that there is no appointment which, in my opinion, would afford so good a chance of extrication from the embarrassments which surround us in that quarter of the world. But if you still persevere in your determination, I have some reason to think that Normanby would not be unwilling to undertake it, and, in that case, should you be inclined to think of Ireland? Your doing so would relieve

1838. Æt. 56. us from much perplexity, and it does not appear to me to be liable to so many objections. It is not so distant. It need not be so long. Your nomination would by its authority put an end to claims which would otherwise be both troublesome and injurious. I do not press you upon the score of duty, because I know that you put that motive higher than I do.

"Believe me,

"My dear Spencer,

"Yours faithfully,

"MELBOURNE."

"ALTHORP, *November 27th*, 1838.

"MY DEAR MELBOURNE,

"With respect to the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, my decision is very easy, for if I know anything of my own character, either of its failings or of its merits, and if I am at all rightly informed as to the feelings of different parties respecting me, I am perfectly satisfied that there is no man professing Liberal principles whose position is such that he could be thought of for Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, so unfit for that situation as myself. In this case, therefore, I have no duties to balance against one another, nor my private feelings to balance against my duties; for if it was possible for me to be tempted to undertake this office, I should be guilty of a gross breach of public duty. But most undoubtedly I am not so tempted, because there is no employment under the Crown which I should dislike so much as having anything to do with the Government of Ireland.

"With respect to Canada the case is different, for there, I think, there is a balance of duty, and, as I told you at Windsor, I very seriously considered what it was my duty to do. I told you the result of that consideration, and after-thoughts have not induced me to change my opinion. To go without hoping to be successful, would of course be

absurd, and success would, as I told you, involve the necessity of my residence in Canada for so long a time, that at my age I must consider it banishment for life. I should, therefore, by going, abandon every private duty which I am now endeavouring to perform; I should sacrifice the probable hope of being able to do a less good, for the very distant possibility of doing a greater. I am quite aware that we are all of us inclined to overrate the importance of the pursuits in which we are engaged, and I daresay, therefore, that I overrate the good I may be able to do in my present pursuits; but still I think I am doing some good. Whatever this is, I must sacrifice it; but much beyond this, I must sacrifice every private duty as a relation, as a neighbour, and as a country gentleman, which I am now able to perform. 1838–41. Æt. 56-59.

"I must, therefore, now decline to accept this more formal offer, as I did before the less formal one which you made me before we met at Windsor. You appear to think what I said then was not quite decided, but it was intended to be so, though, as I always should with you, I told you partly the process by which I came to the decision.

"My personal feelings to most, or, indeed, all the members of your Ministry, make me regret very much refusing to do anything you wish me to do, and I must admit that if you are very angry with me, I shall have no right to complain. I arrived here to-day, but I had got your letter at Woodford last night, too late for me to answer.

"Yours most truly,

"SPENCER."

Moves the Address at the opening of the new Parliament in 1841.

Although Lord Spencer refused to share the honours of the Ministry, yet he proved himself a friend in their adversity. When the verdict of the country had been given against them in the general election of 1841, and they met Parliament in

1841-43. Æt. 59-61.

August to find a powerful majority in opposition, confirming their loss in the public estimation, Lord Spencer quitted his retirement to come forward as their advocate, and move the address in answer to the Queen's Speech at the opening of the Session. After referring to the relations of Great Britain with foreign powers, Lord Spencer passed on to the financial policy of the Ministry.

"It was true," he said, "that the debt had increased, but wealth had increased in greater proportion; to augment this still further was the aim of the Government, who proposed not to increase, but to revise taxation, by lowering restrictive duties, and giving a freer course to the extension of commerce."

"The principles of free trade were," he asserted, "universally admitted in theory. Still it was objected that individual interests and peculiar circumstances demanded protection; but the main peculiarity in the circumstances was severe taxation, and the most effectual way of meeting the taxation was to develop the national wealth, leaving the burden of the debt to fall more lightly on the extended resources of the country."

Arguing, then, in detail, that these principles applied to the cases specially before them, to the duties on timber, on sugar, and, above all, on corn, he declared his conviction that opening the trade would be of great advantage to every interest in the nation. He confessed, however, his deep apprehension of the delay likely to take place, "delay will increase the agitation already at work on the subject; delay may drive capital abroad, and when capital diminished in a country, the diminution went

rapidly on," but "the measures proposed by the Government," he felt "confident would ultimately prevail."* 1843. Æt. 61.

His speech may still be read with interest as foreshadowing the course pursued a few years afterwards by the leading statesmen on both sides. But Lord Spencer took no further part in the struggle in the House of Lords, contenting himself merely with one or two speeches at Northampton on the same subject. In December, 1843, at a dinner given to the Mayor on the expiration of his year of office, Lord Spencer, towards the close of his speech, after a slight sketch of the borough politics, stated his conviction that the repeal of the Corn Laws would not materially lower the price of corn, and also stated (what time has proved to be entirely correct) that the doctrine of reciprocity was a fallacy, † well knowing that it is no advantage for a nation, by imposing large import duties, to shut out its neighbours from the benefits of a cheap market for their produce, merely because those countries decline to reduce their import duties in return. Proposes the repeal of the Corn Laws.

And although this speech, of which I give a few paragraphs, is now well-nigh forgotten, it created at the time a sensation almost without parallel throughout the whole country; it was copied into Sensation throughout the country.

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. lix., p. 16.

† I do not deny that Reciprocity Treaties are sometimes useful, but only for this reason—that the threat used towards another country that we shall impose Protective Duties unless they lower their Import Duties, has sometimes caused them to do so, when other arguments would not have prevailed.—EDITOR.

1835-45. Æt. 53-63.

every newspaper, and was unquestionably the death-note of the Corn Laws, being followed by an Address to his constituents in the form of a letter from Lord J. Russell strongly advocating the same line, and ultimately by the measures taken in Parliament by Sir R. Peel.

"I can only say generally with respect to free trade, that neither of your worthy members are stronger advocates of it than I am. The only time I addressed the House of Lords on the subject, what I said was to the same effect. I am anxious not to be misunderstood on this point. I am a landed proprietor and an occupier of land; and I have no other means of subsistence. If I were to say that I desired a repeal of the Corn Laws, believing at the same time that it would destroy the landed interest, you might say that I was a very honest man, but you would certainly not say I was a wise one. But I believe no such thing. I quite agree with what Mr. Currie* has said. I believe that this is a question of the most essential importance to the welfare of the empire at large. But I do not believe that the repeal of the Corn Laws would tend materially to lower the price of corn. I believe it would raise wages and increase the employment of the people. Thus, although it would not lower the price of corn, it would bring increased means of buying it. I believe, too, that it would be followed by a great increase in the price of corn on the Continent, and the effect of this would be that our manufacturers would be enabled better to compete with the manufacturers of the Continent.† With respect to the objection that foreigners will not take our manufactures in exchange, if we have their corn they must be paid for it,

* Mr. Raikes Currie, then member for Northampton, and many years head of the banking firm which bore his name.—AUTHOR.

† He told me "he thought it would smash foreign manufactures."—LORD LYTTELTON.

and if they are to be paid for it, I only know of one way of paying them, directly or indirectly, and that is by the industry of the people. I set little value on Reciprocity Treaties. If we take from the foreigner corn, we must pay for it with our manufactures, if not directly, indirectly, and the effect of such a trade must be to raise the continental price of corn to our level, not to reduce ours to theirs." 1835–45. Æt. 53-63.

He concluded by saying that they would well understand why in declaring himself an advocate for a total repeal of the Corn Laws he was anxious not to be misunderstood. He should be sorry, indeed, if such a change should involve the ruin of those with whom he was now associated (the agriculturists), but he had no such belief. He believed, on the contrary, that it would be for their benefit as well as for the benefit of the country at large.

Farming pursuits.

The moments during which Lord Spencer was persuaded to emerge from his retirement were, however, very brief, and the real pursuit of these latter years of his life, as has been already pointed out, was the improvement of agriculture, where his accuracy of mind found full scope for its exercise in keeping the pedigrees of his oxen and sheep in the most minute way, working out the degrees of particular crosses to the smallest fraction.

The Wiseton farm, where the high-bred shorthorns were kept, was an annual loss on an average of about 3,000*l*. Indeed, he told a friend one morning, when he had his bailiff's book in his hand, that the year was the best he had ever known. He

1835-45. Æt. 53-63.

was asked what was the profit on the account. He said, "Profit!! Oh, I have only lost 400*l*." The Northamptonshire farm was often, and nearly always latterly, a gain. The reason he used to consider was this, that at Wiseton it was necessary to keep cows of high pedigree, though not profitable, for breeding purposes. Whereas in Northamptonshire the grazing was managed chiefly with a view to making it pay.

He also accepted the challenge of a celebrated Sussex breeder, given at the Oxford Agricultural Show, and carried off the judge's award for the best hundred beasts; and what he effected as President of the Royal Agricultural Society may be studied in many treatises bearing on this subject. It is, however, curious to note, that notwithstanding his great personal popularity, the feeling against Free Trade was so bitter among the agricultural interest, that a minority made efforts, happily ineffectual, to select another president. Fortunately the good sense of the majority triumphed over the opposition. The experience of later days has shown how correct were the prognostications about Free Trade formed by Lord Spencer, and it may fairly be considered one of the most signal instances of his abilities that, although a farmer, and mainly dependent on his rents, he threw himself heart and soul into the movement which, few in these days can be found to deny, has conferred the most striking benefits upon the community.

Only a year before his death, Lord Spencer gave

a proof of his chivalrous regard for old fellow-workers amid the stirring scenes of earlier years. He was told in 1844 (when the Peel Ministry seemed in some difficulties) by the Duke of Bedford, acting, as was supposed, by the advice of some high authority, to hold himself prepared to be sent for by the Queen.* Her Majesty and the Prince Consort had always appreciated much of the good in Lord Spencer's character, and he seems to have been no less impressed by the abilities of the Prince, as, in 1842, in a letter to Lord Brougham, he wrote— 1835–45. Æt. 58-63.

"I do not believe Stockmar is going, and I hope he is not. I am quite confident that the more influence Albert has the better it will be. His judgment, temper, and excellent principles render him invaluable about the Queen. You are aware I have pretty good means of information." †

Lord Spencer talked the matter over with his brother Frederick, saying, that of course it would be his duty to attend the summons and submit his advice to the Queen; but, he added, that his proposition for a new Ministry could not be carried into effect, as he felt that he was bound in honour to offer the Chancellorship to Lord Brougham, if he chose to accept it.

* My authority for this statement is a memorandum found among the papers of his nephew (by marriage), the late Hon. Richard Watson, of Rockingham Castle, and communicated to my father by the Hon. Mrs. Watson.—EDITOR.

† This refers to his sister, Lady Lyttelton, at that time Governess to the Royal children.—LORD LYTTELTON.

1845. Æt. 63.

Lord Spencer's speech on the Maynooth Bill.

The last occasion on which Lord Spencer spoke in the House of Lords was in June, 1845, when the Maynooth College (Ireland) Bill was read a second time. He gave the Bill his strong support, and although any account of those bygone struggles must now be of little interest, I cannot resist quoting a few sentences which might have been applied, almost word for word, to the far greater measure which four and twenty years later removed an alien Church from the Irish people.

"This being the case, you need not look to text writers, or to the theses of Maynooth, to account for the dissatisfaction of the Roman Catholics. I hope this is not an isolated measure. I hope and trust that you are prepared to pursue a different policy towards Ireland; and if you do so, I trust you will not only confirm the union with Ireland, but render that country, by a proper and steady system of conciliation and liberality, the strength, instead of the weakness of the Empire. The noble Earl who moved the amendment, stated that the Protestant Church in Ireland had not had fair play. I was surprised to hear that statement from the noble Earl; but I entirely agree with him, and think that Protestantism has not had fair play. You have placed the Roman Catholics in an inferior position—you have irritated and degraded them—they have a recollection of your severe penal code and persecution; and when you have done all this, you present them with Protestantism. If anything is more likely than another to prevent the adoption of a religious system, it is such a course as this. My lords, I as a Protestant see that it would be hopeless to attempt to convert the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

"I see a very large proportion of the population discontented and dissatisfied in consequence of religious distinctions, which must necessarily tend to create anarchy and confusion

in Ireland. My lords, Presbyterian Scotland was in a state of anarchy and confusion. You gave them a form of church government, and prosperity and tranquillity followed. My lords, Catholic Ireland is in the same state of confusion. You must do something at least for the Roman Catholic religion if you want to produce similar results. Taking this measure as a first step in that direction, I shall give it my cordial support." * 1845. Æt. 63.

Lord Spencer's fondness for intricate calculations of all kinds has been previously mentioned, and at one time it very nearly made him go upon the turf, as he thought he might, in the fluctuation of the odds, have had much exercise in calculation, and he attended accordingly a few meetings at Newmarket; but this was not a pursuit to occupy him for any length of time, and his interest in racing soon became confined to entertaining an annual party at Wiseton for the Doncaster week. It was whilst receiving some friends on one of these occasions, in the autumn of 1845, that he was seized with the illness which so shortly afterwards had a fatal termination.

Seized with illness during the Doncaster Races.

In the summer of 1843, two years before his death, Lord Spencer had observed to Mr. Spencer Lyttelton,† "I shall do so and so next year, and the following year something else"—adding quite calmly, and without any appearance of alarm, "And the next year I shall die." On questioning him on that remarkable prediction, he only answered

* Hansard's Parl. Deb., Third ser., v. lxxxi., p. 31.
† His nephew, the brother of Lord Lyttelton.

1845. Æt. 63. that he should not survive that year, and so it proved. He had been out of health in 1843, but though he recovered, he looked upon it as a "notice to quit," as he said to his sister, Lady Lyttelton. In the autumn of 1845 he was for the first time a steward of the Doncaster Races with Lord George Bentinck, and in order to be at hand, if any difficulty connected with this office should arise, he took a lodging in the town, instead of staying at Wiseton. On the first day of the race meeting he appeared in his usual good health, but on the second (Wednesday) was seized with sudden indisposition; at the moment this did not cause decided apprehension, nor did it prevent him from joining his guests at dinner in the evening. Gradually, however, the attack assumed a much more serious aspect, and though he afterwards rallied sufficiently to bear being moved to Wiseton, a rapid change for the worse soon rendered his condition so alarming that he gave up all hope of recovery. He directly sent for his brother Frederick, who was out shooting at the time, and prepared himself in the calmest manner for death; he arranged with his brother many important matters connected with the latter's succession, and asked him to read out his will to him, which was done. When this was finished, he insisted on his brother going to bed. During the night Lord Spencer sent for his servant, and said to him, "Give me that locket (one containing his wife's hair), I promised her to die with it on." He had previously desired to be buried

by her side with the utmost privacy. Aware that the end was approaching, he said, "Dr. Hall, my thoughts are now in another world, but go and comfort my poor brother. I have passed a happy life; I was sensible of my faults, I prayed for grace and received it." Later he added, "Don't feel for me, I am perfectly happy; and the happiness I have enjoyed in this life makes me think that it will be granted to me in the next." 1845. Æt. 63.

His brother, who had again been sent for, remained with him until he breathed his last, towards five o'clock in the morning of the 1st of October.* His death.

I have permission to publish the following very interesting extract of a letter from Lord Spencer's sister Lady Lyttelton, to her daughter, the Hon. Caroline Lyttelton:—

"Wiseton, *October 3rd*, 1845.

". . . . .—All is, however, well. My dearest brother died as he had lived—in earnest piety and simplicity, and with more than resignation. His was joy! His simple manliness of mind never left him. He read over his will with Fritz, talking over every point, and explaining his wishes, as if it had been another's; and when all was done, and he had conversed beautifully with him, his countenance took an expression of perfect peace, and with a smile on his lips, he remained entirely placid, and death came like a gentle sleep upon him, like that of a child. He said, which makes the state of his feelings the more nice and right, that he deeply felt his had been 'indeed a happy life,'

* I am indebted to the Hon. Mrs. Watson and the Hon. Spencer Lyttelton for these details of Lord Spencer's last moments.—Editor.

and that he was now most happy: but that this did not diminish the joy with which he obeyed the awful summons, and accepted the call to heavenly peace. There is every proof of his deep faith and humility which can be given; and what a consolation! . . . . . The poor servants look most deeply grieved; the house, with its many peculiarities and characteristics, is most affecting! Last Sunday, by my brother's detailed orders, Mr. Shepherd read in church these words, 'Lord Spencer, having been delivered from the danger of immediate death, requests his fellow parishioners to join him in returning humble thanks to Almighty God.'"

His death seemed to be caused by a total collapse of physical power, as the symptoms of his illness had not appeared to the doctors sufficiently severe to account for such a sudden end. But it may, perhaps, be explained by the fact that for many years Lord Spencer, owing to his great fear of gout (an hereditary disease in his family), had practised the severest abstinence as to food, which occasioned very great depression both of mind and body. He used to weigh his breakfast, and then, having eaten the very small portion he allowed himself, rush half famished from the room to escape further temptation. Nothing but his great power of self-denial could have enabled him to persevere in a mode of life so trying, and in all probability really injurious.

The opinion entertained of him by two of the colleagues who knew and valued him, is shown by a few sentences they have written, in which every line proves thorough appreciation of his qualities,

and I cannot think these will fail to be of interest to the reader if I insert them here before closing the biography. The first was written to Lord Spencer by Mr. Poulett Thomson, when he had expressed misgivings as to his capacity for discharging the duties of his office; the other was received by the author from Mr. Edward Ellice some time after Lord Spencer's death.

HE RT. HON. C. POULETT THOMSON TO VISCT. ALTHORP.

"You told me that you felt that you did not do the business of Chancellor of the Exchequer satisfactorily, and that your work was done for you by others to a degree that you felt ought not to be the case.

"If the opinion of those for whom, and before whom you work, the people in the House of Commons, be of any avail to make you better satisfied, I can assure you that you ought to be so, for I declare to you that in any conversations that I have heard upon the subject, the complaint has always been that your colleagues and your subordinates left you a larger portion of work than ought to fall to your share, instead of the reverse. This I most unhesitatingly declare to be the opinion of every man in the House of Commons whose sentiments I have ever had the opportunity of knowing, and they are not a few. . . . . The organization of the whole machine, the calculation of all its probable results, the defence to the public of its working, the decision of all points of principle and their justification, are, it seems to me, your duties, and all this you do, and do admirably, to the satisfaction of your friends, in spite of the bitterest opposition, and of the immense labour which circumstances have imposed upon you as leader of the House of Commons, and as charged with the Reform Bill. . . . . I can rely, not on my own opinion only, but on that of

all, whether in the House or in the country, upon the subject."

THE RT. HON. EDWARD ELLICE TO THE AUTHOR.

"He was an excellent illustration of the type of an English country gentleman, gifted with strong common sense, equal courage, firmness, and independence; incapable of thinking or doing anything inconsistent with the nicest sense of truth and honour, with a most humble sense of his own ability, a large and philanthropic heart, and a total absence of those aristocratic prejudices and habits and feelings which create so much heart-burning in this country, and deprive many other men of 'his order,' of the popularity which he so largely enjoyed. . . . . He would himself have preferred to be an independent member of Parliament. And we all know the resistance he made to his nomination as leader of the party, as well as to Lord Grey, to undertake office. He was only induced to become Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the Government in the House of Commons, by Lord Grey's insisting upon it as a *sine quâ non* condition of his undertaking the Government. In office he displayed eminently all the qualities I have given him credit for. He gained so completely the confidence of the House and of the country by the display of them, that he had no occasion for the showy talents and art of eloquence and management by which other men have been enabled to act the same part, without the same success. Sir Robert Peel in vain attempted to remove the impression made on the House by his simple and unadorned, and always sensible and forcible, matter-of-fact speeches and statements,* and always complained that Lord Althorp had only to get up, take off his hat, and shake his head, to satisfy the House

* One great source of the influence he exercised over his hearers, was the scrupulous fairness with which he stated his opponent's case before he attempted to answer it. I have heard Sir Robert Peel remark on this.—LORD BELPER.

that the replies to them, however plausible they might appear, were founded in a fallacy."

Character.

Lord Spencer's character has, I hope, been sufficiently portrayed in the course of this Memoir to make any lengthened comment unnecessary, but I cannot close my task without for a moment calling attention to some few of the salient points by which it was distinguished, even when viewed by the side of the many gifted intellects with which he was allied in public life. His foresight and courage, so tempered by sagacity that it is difficult to say which quality predominated, shone out most brightly by the force of circumstances, impelled as he was by them into the leading position that he filled far more than by his own ambition. He no doubt owed something to the advantage of hereditary rank; but on the other hand, it must in fairness be remembered that the very fact of this distinguished position laid him open to many temptations in his earlier career, from which he would otherwise have been exempt; and it was no small token of self-denial and tenacity of purpose that the desire to gratify his parents made him the first in a distinguished year at Trinity, when, owing to his privilege as a nobleman, he was deprived of the additional incentive of a high place in the list of honours.

That he entered on his official duties with reluctance, and resigned them with the keenest satisfaction, is notorious. That Lord Grey declined

to take office unless Lord Althorp led the House of Commons, and that the King four years later dismissed the Ministry when Lord Althorp left the House of Commons, are matters of history,* and a far stronger testimony than any remarks of mine could be, to the skill, firmness, and command of temper with which, throughout a period of violent excitement and reckless agitation he there maintained an undisputed sway.

During those years the flood of popular feeling not only swept away many ancient abuses, but carried measures, the principles of which have become axioms of later statesmanship. With these the name of Lord Althorp must for ever remain identified; and if history, while it records the extent of his influence and force of character, owe aught of the truth and fulness of its estimate to what has been here written, this Memoir, the fruit of personal and political intimacy, will have well attained its end. He was appreciated alike amidst the busy turmoil of Parliamentary conflicts, and in the quiet retirement of country life; whilst men of all parties,

* The intimate terms on which Lord Spencer lived with the King may be inferred from the following extract of a letter from Sir H. Taylor:—

"ST. JAMES'S PALACE, *April* 23*rd*, 1834.

"The King has received Viscount Althorp's report of Mr. O'Connell's introduction of his motion for the repeal of the Union, and as His Majesty does not take any interest in its success or that of any of his undertakings, he rejoices to learn that his speech upon this occasion was so bad and tiresome, although he may pity the sane portion of his audience."—EDITOR.

however widely differing on other points, have united in allowing to his worth a tribute of candid admiration: whether in these pages too much has been said, let any who have studied the annals of those times determine.

# APPENDIX

## I.

### EXTRACTS FROM THE ALTHORP CHASE BOOK.

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## II.

### ADDRESS TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP.

# APPENDIX I.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE ALTHORP CHASE BOOK.

SELECTED BY THE PRESENT EARL SPENCER FROM THE VOLUMES PRESERVED IN THE LIBRARY AT ALTHORP.

*November 30th*, 1809.

We found a fox in Crick Ozier bed, and went away at the best pace; left Crick on the right, Yelvertoft on the left, Yelvertoft field side close on the right, Elkington on the right, pointed to Stanford, turned to the right over Hemploe Hills, left Stanford on the left, crossed the Avon at North Kilworth mill, left the two Kilworths on the left, Watton on the left, ran from scent to view, and killed him near Bruntingthorpe, in one hour and twenty minutes. The first thirty-eight minutes of which was quite at the best pace; it was afterwards very hard running, but not quite so fast. On the whole, this was certainly, by far, the best run I ever saw. Crazy, Prattle, Wonder, Artless, Coaster, Cruel, Outlaw, Bruiser, Boxer, Caroline, Cherish, Dealer, Darling, Mawkish, Actor, Clincher, Candour, Flasher, Flamer, Frantic, Mischief, Roguish, Benedick, Cottager, Emperor, Roderick, and Troilus distinguished themselves.

---

*March 16th*, 1810.

Found several foxes in Stow Wood, and after running these some time, the fox they were engaged with scratched into the main earth. Found several foxes in Great Preston Wood, after running twenty-five minutes in covert, we

came away through Preston village, through the Church Wood, over Fawsley grounds to Fawsley House, where the fox waited for us in the Spinney, before the house; went away in view across the park, left Badby Wood on the left, nearly to Newnham village, crossed the brook at Newnham mill, turned to the left over Badby field, crossed the Banbury road near the turnpike, left Staverton Wood on the right to the plantation beyond the wood, almost without a check; we viewed him away from thence, he pointed first towards Bragborough, turned to the left under Staverton, crossed the Warwick road, over Newbold grounds, over Shuckborough hill, through the plantations, over Knapton field, leaving Knapton on the right, crossed the navigation, and killed him in Southam field;—one hour and fifty-eight minutes from Preston Wood—one of the finest runs ever seen. Hounds well together. Lucifer, Lalage, Dealer, Chider, Mawkish, Bruiser, Candour, Cataract, Donovan, Demirep, Harmony, Hyale, Hillisbery, Malaprop, Ragman, distinguished themselves. Prattle was very forward the latter part of it. A good holding scent from Staverton, but not so fast as before, and till the last two miles, when they set a running for him.

---

*January 20th*, 1812.

We drew Clipstone Quantary without finding, but found a fox in Hothorp Hills, and went away at the bottom over Marston field, up the hill, through Marston Wood, pointed to Nethercoat's Gorse, but turned a little to the left and checked, and were brought to hunting, went on, left Clipstone on the left and hunted up to him in Tallyho, took a turn there and went away again at the best pace, left Haselbeech on the left, over a corner of Naseby field, left Tallyho on the right, over Kelmarsh Grounds, left Haselbeech close on the right, Blueberries on the right, Berrydales on the left, to Cottesbrook; there we had a long check, but hit him away again at slow hunting by Sir W. Langham's new

lodge, over the road between Guilsborough and Hollowell, left Ravensthorpe on the right and began to run hard, left East Haddon on the right, over Brington Hills, left Brockhall on the right and run the best pace over Flower field to Flower, where we were again brought to a long check by the fox slipping us among the buildings; we hunted him on, however, over the river and the canal and back again, but lost him between Heyford and Bugbrook, after running for four hours and a quarter. As far as Tallyho was fifty minutes; as far as Cottesbrook one hour and forty, and as far as Flower, three hours and thirty-four. I never saw more distress among the horses. Outlaw, Caroline, Mawkish, Roguish, Reuben, Abigail, Aniseed, Cataract, Cottager, Leopold, Lalage, Legacy, Demirep, Hyale, Lydia, Promise, Ragman, Senator, Warrener, Basilisk, Barbara, Corsican, Capulet, Lazarus, Saladin, Cœlia, Eleanor, Prophetess, distinguished themselves.

# APPENDIX II.

## ADDRESS SIGNED BY TWO HUNDRED AND SIX MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

LONDON, 11*th July*, 1834.

MY LORD,

Convinced that at the present crisis the peace and prosperity of the Empire would be promoted by your Lordship holding a distinguished place in His Majesty's Councils, we beg to express our deep regret at your retirement.

If His Majesty should be graciously pleased to desire a continuation of your services, we beg to assure you that we shall be prepared to afford to your Lordship our best support in carrying into effect the reforms and improvements so anxiously desired by the country, in accordance with that liberal and enlightened policy which secured to the people the great and salutary measure of Parliamentary Reform.

We believe we shall fulfil our duty to our constituents, and best promote the general interests and welfare of the realm, by thus evincing our confidence that your Lordship, and those with whom you might ally yourself, would act upon constitutional and liberal principles in the administration of public affairs.

We have the honour to remain,

Your Lordship's faithful servants,

TO VISCOUNT ALTHORP, M.P.

## SIGNATURES.

G. Byng.
F. Burdett.
G. Philips.
R. Grosvenor.
Beilby Thompson.
John Fenton.
J. Parrott.
Robert Biddulph.
Henry Lytton Bulwer.
Ed. Lytton Bulwer.
Pryse Pryse.
Thos. S. Duncombe.
Ed. Pendarves.
C. S. Lefevre.
H. Lambton.
J. J. Guest.
Charles Fitzroy.
James Fitzroy.
Christ. Fitzsimon.
H. Davies.
G. J. Vernon.
Acheson.
John Byng.
Molyneux.
E. Ayshford Sanford.
R. C. Ferguson.
Hanbury Tracy.
Charles Cavendish.
E. J. Stanley.
A. Bannerman.
W. Peter.
A. W. Beauclerk.
Charles Tennyson.
William Clay.
George Keppel.
Daniel O'Connell.
Maurice O'Connell.
Morgan O'Connell.
John O'Connell.
H. D. Goring.
James Oswald.
A. Marcus Hill.
J. H. Seale.
Lumley.
Robt. Ferguson.
John Storey Penleaze.
W. James.
H. Winston Barron.
James Grattan.
Francis Vincent.
B. L. Lester.
Charles Palmer.
Ed. Romilly
W. Tayleur.
Paul Methuen.
D. Browne.
W. H. Ord.
John Ashley Warre.
G. Evans.
C. T. Tower.
Jas. Stuart.
W. A. Ingilby.
R. Steuart.
J. H. Vivian.
Standish O'Grady.
F. M'Namara.
G. Standish Barry.
Frederic Paget.
William M'Namara.
Thos. Beaumont.
Morpeth.
William Brougham.
Wm. Pitt Lennox.
Thomas Sheppard.
Bolton King.
Henry J. Winnington.
R. M. Rolfe.
Waterpark.
H. W. Tancred.
R. Etwall.
Henry G. Moreton.
Augustus Moreton.
J. Maxwell.
Richd. Walker.
C. O'Callaghan.
H. V. Stafford Jerningham.
A. Carew O'Dwyer.
George Anson.
E. T. Bainbridge.
J. Dunlop.
Montague Chapman.
G. F. Heneage.
R. Macleod.
W. W. Whitmore.
Thos. Reid Kemp.
Robert Heron.

Ed. Bolton Clive.
D. G. Hallyburton.
Chs. Phillipps.
William Molesworth.
John Romilly.
R. Watson.
G. Wm. Wood.
Charles O'Connell.
Wm. Pinney.
Kedgwin Hoskins.
Ebenezer Jacob.
David Roche.
C. Fleming.
John Smith.
John Abel Smith.
C. J. Kemys Tynte.
Charles S. Barnett.
R. N. Shawe.
Dudley Coutts Stuart.
Charles J. F. Russell.
G. Traill.
J. Wedgwood.
C. Pelham.
Thos. Bewes.
E. Barnard.
Chas. Adam.
D. Pleydell Bouverie.
Edward Petre.
R. H. Gronow.
Geo. Grote.
C. K. K. Tynte.
Edward Buller.
C. F. Palmer.
W. H. Windham.
Ebrington.
W. F. Ponsonby.
T. F. Buxton.
Russell.
Henry Cavendish.
W. H. Whitbread.
John Parker.
Ar. Atherley.
John Bonham Carter.
Mark Philips.
Joseph Brotherton.
Robert Torrens.
Rawdon Briggs, jun.
R. Thicknesse.
John Wilks.
Edward Baines.
Robert Wallace.
W. Gillon.
Charles Langdale.
J. S. Buckingham.

W. Salusbury Trelawny.
E. S. Cayley.
Geo. Cayley.
H. G. Ward.
Wm. Ewart.
Charles A. Walker.
J. H. Talbot.
Thomas Wallace.
J. H. Callender.
Thomas Martin.
J. Ruddell Todd.
J. S. Sebright.
Edw. Williams.
Charles Paget.
S. Majoribanks.
H. Warburton.
Craven Berkeley.
Grantley F. Berkeley.
Wynn Ellis.
J. Brocklehurst.
Robt. C. Dundas.
O'Conor Don.
A. W. Robarts.
W. J. Denison.
Thomas Bewes.
John Collier.
A. H. Lynch.
M. Charles Blunt.
T. Gisborne.
F. W. Mullins.
G. Poulett Scrope.
Edward Strutt.
J. Talbot.
Charles Buller, jun.
B. Hawes, jun.
Philip H. Howard.
Will. Hutt.
Rigby Wason.
T. Dundas.
John Gully.
Joseph Hume.
H. A. Aglionby.
J. H. Lloyd.
T. B. Lennard.
W. Crawford.
John Humphery.
Clements.
T. K. Staveley.
Wm. Blamire.
E. C. Lister.
Cornelius O'Callaghan.
T. E. Winnington.
George Pryme.
George Sinclair.

# INDEX.


ABERCROMBY, Right Hon. James, (afterwards Lord Dunfermline) his character of Lord Archibald Hamilton, 120; candidate for the Speakership, 529; correspondence respecting, between Mr. Hume and Lord Spencer, 530—532; elected Speaker, 536; alluded to, 450 *n.*, 455 *n.*, 479.

Acklom, Mr., 148, 152.

———, Mrs., 149, 150, 169, 172.

Acland, Sir Thomas, 313.

Adam, Mr. William, 296.

Adelaide, Queen, 434, 438.

Allen, Dr., Bishop of Ely, Private Tutor at Cambridge to Lord Althorp, 73—77, 79; Lord Althorp's letter to, 169.

Althorp, Viscount (afterwards (third) Earl Spencer), his birth, 29; goes to Harrow, 32; companions at Harrow, 43—71; goes to Trinity College Cambridge, 71; in the first class in the College examination, 77; is first man of his year, 78; quits Cambridge, 84; foreign travel, 85, 86; member for Okehampton, 86; stands for University of Cambridge and is defeated, 86, 87; commissioner for the Treasury, 88; returned for St. Albans, 88; for Northamptonshire, 88; takes part in proceedings against the Duke of York, 98; maiden speech, 101—103; joins the Radical section of the Whig party, 110—112; political friends, 114—123; speech against re-instatement of the Duke of York, 133; speech against the leather duty, 136; friendship with Mr. Brougham, 137; speech on Peace Preservation Bill, 138; athletic exercises, 139, 140; love of hunting, 143—146; marriage with Miss Acklom, 149; residence at Wiseton Hall, 155—161; moves for committee on public affairs, 163; opposes Ministerial measures, 165; diligence in attending the House, 166; grief for Lady Althorp's death, 168; seclusion at Wiseton, 168, 172; re-elected for Northamptonshire, 181; returns to Parliamentary duties, 182; Insolvent Debtors' Bill, 182—186; removes to the Albany, 186; study of political economy, 187; Bill for recovery of small debts, 189—192; withdraws Bill, 193; speech against Coercion Bill, 198; committee on the Corn Laws, 201; plan for Relief of the Nation, 205; moves for committee on the state of Ireland, 212; approves Mr. Huskisson's policy, 212; supports Coalition Ministry, 218; chairman of finance committee, 221; supports Catholic Emancipation Bill, 229; supports motion for

reduction of taxation, 238; resists attempts to depreciate the currency, 239, 240; becomes leader of the Opposition, 245; returned for Northamptonshire without a contest, 248; County business, 249; chairman of Quarter Sessions, 249; speech at the meeting of Parliament in 1830, 254; takes office under Lord Grey as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons, 260; again returned for Northamptonshire without opposition, 265; warmly received in the House, 265; plan for settlement of Civil List, 270; the Budget, 272—284; abandons the transfer duties, 285; eagerness for Parliamentary Reform, 290; prepares Reform Bill, 291—294; in favour of the Ballot, 295; speaks on the Bill, 300, 304; Dissolution of Parliament on rejection of the Bill, 305; re-elected for Northamptonshire with Lord Milton, 318; speaks on Second Reform Bill, 322, 331; takes management of it in the Commons, 335—345; Bill passes, 345; speech at Reform dinner at Thatched House Tavern, 347; speech in Parliament on vote of confidence in the Ministry, 356—360; letter to chairman of Birmingham Political Union, 362; the Game Act, 363; letter to Lord Grey respecting a creation of peers, 370; speaks on Third Reform Bill, 380; committal of the Bill, 387, 388; his labours in committee, 387, 388, 393—399; second letter to Lord Grey urging a creation of peers, 403—406; resigns with Lord Grey, 421, 423; returns to office, 435; Bill passed, 436; successfully resists motion against payment of interest on Russian Dutch Loan, 440; the Budget, 441; intimacy with Sir James Graham and the Duke of Richmond, 444; view of Irish affairs, 447; supports election of Mr. Manners Sutton to the Speakership, 450; speech on Irish Church Bill, 453; speech on Bill for abolition of naval and military sinecures, 457; speech against depreciation of the currency, 459; the Budget, 459—464; the Bank Charter, 468, 469; in favour of Negro Emancipation, 470; his last Budget, 480, 481; introduces Poor Law Bill, 484; changes in the Cabinet, 487, 489, 490; Tithe Bill, 493; conversation respecting Coercion Bill with Mr. Littleton, 495; is against clauses prohibiting public meetings, 495—498; letter respecting them to Lord Grey, 498; letter to Mr. Littleton, 503; statements in Parliament, 504, 509; resignation, 507; letter to, from the Lord Chancellor, 510; reply, 511; receives address from Liberal members, 516; resumes office under Lord Melbourne, 518; carries Coercion Bill, 519; succeeds to the Earldom, 522, 523; letters from Whig statesmen, 522—526. (See Spencer, third Earl.)

Althorp, Viscountess, marriage, 148; character of 149—152; her life at Wiseton, 155—160; her confinement and death, 168.

Althorp, 14; description of, 15 *n.*; library at, 15; hospitality at, 142.

Anglesey, Marquis of, his Irish appointments, 262; opposition to Mr. O'Connell, 287.

Attwood, Mr., chairman of Birmingham Union, 362; receives communication from Lord Althorp, 368; motion for depreciation of the currency defeated, 459.

Auckland, Lord (afterwards Earl of Auckland), President of the Board of Trade, 263 *n.*, 264 ; at the Mansion House, 328 ; First Lord of the Admiralty, 488.

Bankes, Mr., motion of, during the Duke of York's trial, 97—99, 106—108 ; defeated in Dorset, 313.
Baring, Right Hon. Alexander (afterwards Lord Ashburton), President of the Board of Trade, 263 *n.* ; consulted respecting payment of interest on Russian Dutch Loan by Lord Althorp, 391 ; speech on the franchise, 395 ; speech on Lord Ebrington's Address, 427, 428 ; opposes payment of interest on Loan, 440 ; alluded to, 239 *n.*, 431.
Baring, Right Hon. Sir Francis (afterwards Lord Northbrook), nominated to a seat at the Treasury, 264 ; his opinion of Lord Althorp, 301 ; conversation on Reform Bill with Lord Althorp, 415—417 ; Secretary of the Treasury, 490.
Barnes, Mr., 484.
Bathurst, Earl, 207 *n.*, 214 *n.*, 228 *n.*
Bathurst, Right Hon. Charles, 108, 109.
Bessborough, Earl of. (See Duncannon).
Birmingham Political Union, 251 ; pass vote of thanks to Lord Althorp and Lord John Russell, 361 ; dictatorial tone of, 361 ; meeting of, 367 ; respect for Lord Althorp, 368.
Blomfield, Dr., Bishop of London, receives preferment from Lord Spencer, 18 ; expectations regarding Reform Bill, 373.
Bolingbroke, Viscount, 379 *n.*
Bourne, Right Hon. Sturges, 384.
Bromley, Dr., 32.
Brooks's Club, meetings at, 422, 429.
Brougham, Mr. Henry (afterwards Lord Brougham), his opinion of Lord Spencer, 17 ; of Lady Spencer, 20 ; at Spencer House, 21 ; with Lord Essex, 27 ; appoints Sir Charles Pepys Master of the Rolls, 62 ; adherence to technical rules of evidence, 96 ; his opinion of Mr. Whitbread, 115 ; moves rejection of leather duty, 135, 136 ; friendship with Lord Althorp, 137, 138 ; speech in favour of committee on public affairs, 164 ; originates plan of Coalition Ministry, 214—218 ; Mr. Canning's jealousy of, 218 ; admired by the Tories, 230 *n.* ; reproaches Mr. Hume, 236 ; is against Income Tax, 239 ; aversion of Whigs to, 245, 247 ; accepts Lord Althorp as Whig Leader, 246 ; speech against Sir Edward Sugden, 248 ; returned for Yorkshire, 252 ; gives notice of a Reform Bill, 254, 255, 257 *n.* ; rejects offer of Attorney-Generalship, 261 ; receives the Great Seal, 261 ; popularity with the public, 262 *n.*, 353, 448 *n.* ; his principal Secretary, 268 *n.* ; his view on pensions, 272 ; against transfer duty, 275 *n.* ; Chancery Reform, 288, 289 *n.* ; his views on the franchise, 295 ; fears regarding Reform Bill, 298 ; praise of Lord Althorp, 301 ; irritates the Tories, 306 ; Cabinet dinner, 309, 310 *n.* ; attacked in the Lords, 322 ; affronted at the Mansion House, 329 ; remonstrates with Lord Milton, 342 ; able speech on Reform, 350—352 ; his opinion of Lord Lyndhurst, 351 *n.* ; Bankruptcy Act, 363 ; sanguine about Reform, 384 ; illness of, 385, 393 ; in favour of a creation of peers, 369, 403 ; interview with leading Radicals, 420 ; vainly pressed by the King to remain in office with the

Tories, 423; Appropriation clause, 471; originates Poor Law Bill, 483; able management of Bill, 484, 485; Irish Church Commission, 487; opposes Lord Auckland's appointment, 488; differs from Lord Althorp on Coercion Bill, 496; letter to Lord Althorp respecting Mr. Littleton, 504; expresses vexation at Lord Althorp's resignation, 510; replied to, 511; persuades the King to make Lord Melbourne Premier, 518; speeches in Scotland, 521; letter to Lord Althorp on dismissal of Ministry, 525; annoyance of, 526; correspondence with Lord Althorp, 548—550; allusions to, 88, 92, 112 *n.*, 165, 195 *n.*, 228 *n.*, 233, 234 *n.*, 346, 369, 435, 534, 540, 559.

Brougham, Mr. William (afterwards (second) Lord Brougham), 472.

Brownlow, Right Hon. Charles (afterwards Lord Lurgan), 398.

Brydges, Sir John, 333.

Buller, Mr. Charles, 493.

Bulwer, Right Hon. Sir Edward Lytton (afterwards Lord Lytton), 398.

Burdett, Sir Francis, political views of, 99; democratic opinions of, 114, 120—122; case of Gale Jones, 129; speech of, at Brooks's, 216; presides at the Reform dinner, 346, 347 *n.*; head of political union in London, 366; seconds nomination of Mr. Manners Sutton to the Speakership, 450; alluded to, 307 *n.*

Burke, Right Hon. Edmund, 21, 119, 177, 277.

Byron, Lord, 43, 117, 140, 157.

Calcraft, Mr., 303, 313.

Campbell, Rt. Hon. Sir John (afterwards Lord Campbell), 62, 384.

Canning, Right Hon. George, 119; his policy, 207, 208; Lord Althorp's aversion to, 209, 222; Premier, 214; joined by the Whigs, 216, 259; his opinion of Mr. Brougham, 217, 218; promises finance committee, 221; death of, 223; liberal views of, 228; allusions to, 16, 45, 122, 125, 210, 211, 212, 229, 231, 236, 379.

Canning, Rev. William, 217.

Carington, Lord, 433.

Carnarvon, Earl of, 48, 349.

Caroline, Queen, 199, 200.

Carter, Mr. John Bonham, 248; remark on Lord Althorp, 394; consulted by Lord Althorp, 518; allusions to, 393, 456.

Cartwright, Mr., defeated by Lord Althorp in Northamptonshire, 317; hostile to Reform Bill, 328.

Castlereagh, Viscount (afterwards Marquis of Londonderry), his policy, 164; member of committee on Corn Laws, 203—205; death of, 206; allusions to, 207, 209.

Catholic Emancipation, Lord Althorp's zeal for, 139; Mr. Canning's policy respecting, 210, 214; agreed to be left in abeyance by Coalition Ministry, 214; brought forward by Sir Robert Peel, 229, 354; consequent distrust of the Tory leaders by their party, 252, 318, 379 *n.*

Cavendish, Lord George, 215.

Chadwick, Mr., 483 *n.*

Chancery Reform, undertaken by Lord Brougham, 288, 289 *n.*

Chandos clause, the, 339.

Civil List, the, motion of Sir Henry Parnell on, 256; Lord Althorp's plan for settlement of, 270.

Clarke, Mrs., 96, 104, 106.

Clive, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Powis), 381 *n.*

Clive, Hon. Robert, 381 *n.*

Coalition Ministry, 216; originated by

Mr. Brougham, 214, 217; under Mr. Canning, 214; under Lord Goderich, 221, 224; close of, 227; allusion to, 179. (See Canning).
Cobbett, Mr. William, 328, 450.
Cochrane, Sir Alexander, 154.
Cockburn, Lord (of Session), 272.
Corn Laws, the, committee on, 201—204; Lord Althorp in favour of their repeal, 554—557.
Courtenay, Mr. (afterwards Earl of Devon), 184, 285, 436.
Coventry, Earl of, 414.
Cowper, Earl, 327.
Croker, Right Hon. John Wilson, opposes the Reform Bill, 335, 383, 387; speech answered by Lord Althorp, 400.
Cumberland, H.R.H. the Duke of, 456.
Currie, Mr. Raikes, 556.

Dashwood, Right Hon. Sir Francis, 80.
Davenport, Mr. Edward, 224.
Dawson, Right Hon. George Robert, 243, 324 *n.*, 381.
De Mauley, Lord, 53.
Denison, Right Hon. John Evelyn (afterwards Viscount Ossington), 140, 229 *n.*
Denman, Rt. Hon. Sir Thomas (afterwards Lord Denman), 27, 329, 350.
Dover, Lord, 48, 427, 434.
Drummond, Lieutenant, R.E., 539 *n*, 540 *n*, 543, 544 *n*.
Drury, Dr., 32, 43.
Duncannon, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Bessborough), at Harrow with Lord Althorp, 46; official life of, 47—53; member of Reform Committee, 292 *n.*; alluded to, 303, 391, 392, 425, 475.
Dundas, Sir David, 131.
Dunfermline, Lord. (See Abercromby.)
Durham, Earl of, one of Reform Committee, 292; in favour of a creation of peers, 369, 403; attack on Lord Grey, 374; alluded to, 295, 368, 551.

Ebrington, Viscount (afterwards Earl Fortescue), friendship with Lord Althorp, 110; praise of Lord Althorp, 343; moves vote of confidence in Whig Ministry, 353; moves address to the Crown on the state of public affairs, 426; question respecting Duke of Wellington, 430; consulted by Lord Althorp, 518.
Eldon, Earl of, energy of, 90; opposes Insolvent Debtors' Bill, 185; not hostile to Reform, 252; alluded to, 63, 66, 224, 289 *n.*
Ellenborough, Earl of, 88; opposes Local Courts Bill, 192; hostile to Coalition Ministry, 219.
Ellice, Right Hon. Edward, 48; exertions in the Whig interest, 303, 319; the Whig whipper-in, 392; Secretary of the Treasury, 489; referred to by Lord Althorp, 506; panegyric on Lord Althorp, 566; alluded to, 48, 391, 425, 470, 491.
Elliott, Mr. W., 109, 134.
Ellison, Mr., 70.
Essex, Earl of, friendship with Lord Spencer, 21; at the French Court, 25, 26; writes to Lord Spencer on the retirement of Lord Grey, 517.
Euston, Earl of (afterwards Duke of Grafton), 442.
Evans, Colonel De Lacy (afterwards General Sir De Lacy Evans), 465.

Fitzpatrick, General, supports Duke of York, 108.
Folkestone, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Radnor), joins in proceedings

against the Duke of York, 98, 100, 106, 107, 109; friendship with Lord Althorp, 114; character of, 118, 119; brings forward motion for committee of inquiry, 124, 125, 127; speaks on the Spanish question, 211.
Fox, Right Hon. Charles James, xvii, 21, 23, 24, 111, 112, 116, 127, 177, 179, 352.

Garrow, Rt. Hon. Sir W., 183, 190, 192.
Gascoigne, General, 304, 321.
George IV., 130; accession of, 199; political opinions of, 217 *n.*; death, 246; alluded to, 27, 200, 227.
Gibbon, Mr. Edward, 18, 19.
Gladstone, Right Hon. W. E., 295 *n.*, 471.
Goderich, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Ripon), 221, 224, 225, 227, 470. (See Robinson.)
Gordon, Mr. Robert, success of, in House of Commons, 242; dissatisfaction of, 271.
Gordon, Hon. Wm., 332, 334.
Goulburn, Right Hon. Henry, 229; opposition to Lord Althorp's Budget, 280, 281, 282; financial views of, 286; reply to Lord Ebrington, 356; alluded to, 232 *n.*, 389.
Graham, Right Hon. Sir James, speaks on reduction of salaries, 235; opposes the Tories, 241, 242; attachment to Lord Althorp, 246, 293; financial views of, 274; joins in preparing Reform Bill, 292; in favour of a creation of peers, 370, 371; success in agriculture, 444; consents to abandon Appropriation clause, 471; secedes from Lord Grey's Ministry, 488; allusions to, 245, 280, 321, 369, 392, 416, 443 *n.*, 451, 455, 463.
Grant, Right Hon. Charles (afterwards Lord Glenelg), defends Lord Althorp's Budget, 283; East India Company's Charter, 467, 468; consulted by Lord Althorp, 506; alluded to, 247 *n.*, 547.
Gregson, Mr., 325 *n.*
Grenville, Lord, 14, 24, 91, 349.
Grenville, Right Hon. Thomas, friendship with Lord Spencer, 20; sketch of his life, 21–25.
Greville, Mr. Charles, 377 *n.*
Grey, Earl, adheres to Lord Grenville, 91; not hostile to Duke of York, 93; remark on Mr. Whitbread, 117; opposes suspension of Habeas Corpus Act, 164; attacks Coalition Ministry, 219; speech on Reform, 253; Premier, 259; his appointments, 260—264, 271 *n.*; Lord Althorp's letter to, 267; speech on taking office, 269; Lord Althorp's co-operation with in Reform Bill, 290—294; dislike of the Ballot, 295; speeches on Reform Bill, 350; admiration of Lord Brougham's speech on Reform, 352; indignation at language of political unions, 368, 376; Lord Althorp's letter to, respecting a creation of peers, 370, 371; bent on passing Reform Bill, 372; modifies disfranchisement clauses, 373; attacked by Lord Durham, 375; interview with Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe, 377; view regarding new peers, 374, 385, 386; mortified by division on Russian Dutch Loan, 392; speaks on the Tithe question, 397; offers Lord Althorp a peerage, 401; urged by Lord Althorp to create peers, 403—406; reply, 407—413; speeches on Reform, 414, 417, 418; determines to resign, 419; note to Lord Brougham, 423 *n.*; is recalled, 434, 435; entreats Lord Althorp not to relinquish office, 445, 446;

Mr. Stanley's influence with, 452; annoyance at Ministerial defeat on the Malt duty, 462; agrees to Negro Emancipation, 470; gives up Appropriation clause, 471; indifference to office, 476; reconstructs the Ministry, 489, 490; letters from Lord Wellesley to, on Coercion Bill, 494; refuses to make any concession, 496; letter to Lord Althorp from, 498; carries his point in the Cabinet, 499; disavows knowledge of communication with Mr. O'Connell, 501; refuses Mr. Littleton's resignation, 504; receives Lord Althorp's resignation, 505; vainly urges Lord Althorp to remain, 507; letter to Mr. Littleton, 509; resigns, 509; reference to, by Lord Essex, 517; urges Lord Althorp to return to office, 518; mention of, by Lord Brougham, 549; allusions to, 27, 326, 329, 354, 377, 378 *n.*, 473, 534, 567.
Grey, Mr. (of Dilston), 545.
Grote, Mr. George, 484.
Gurney, Mr. Hudson, 299.

Habeas Corpus Act, suspension of, opposed by Lord Althorp, 165.
Halford, Sir Henry, 145, 323.
Hamilton, Lord Archibald, joins in proceedings against the Duke of York, 98; intercourse with Lord Althorp, 114; character of, 119, 120; supports Lord Folkestone's motion of enquiry, 125; moves for restoration of Queen's name in the Liturgy, 200.
Hardinge, Right Hon. Sir Henry (afterwards Lord Hardinge), liberal predilections of, 230; opinion against Reform Bill, 299; praise of Lord Althorp, 400; remark to Lord Althorp, 430; alluded to, 431.
Harewood, Earl of, 417.
Harrow, Lord Althorp at, 32--35; his letters from, 36—42; his companions at, 43—70.
Harrowby, Earl of, 45, 377, 404, 414, 417.
Harvey, Mr. Whittle, 458.
Herries, Right Hon. John Charles, 221, 439.
Hill, Mr. M. D., 432.
Hobhouse, Right Hon. Sir John Cam (afterwards Lord Broughton), 271 *n.*, 465, 466 *n.*
Hodges, Mr., 32, 485.
Holland, Lord, in Mr. Canning's Cabinet, 216; consulted by Lord Grey, 259, 263; admires Lord Brougham's speech, 352; consents to give up Appropriation clause, 471; urges Lord Althorp to return to political life, 533; replied to, 534; alluded to, 27, 210, 472, 549.
Holland, Lady, 22, 486.
Holmes, Mr., 48, 393, 473.
Horne, Sir William, 61.
Horner, Mr., 21, 88.
Howard, Hon. William, 98, 108.
Howick, Viscount (afterwards Earl Grey), 233, 234 *n.*, 252, 282, 537.
Hume, Mr. Joseph, moves Resolution for reduction of public establishments, 235; esteem for Lord Althorp, 246; returned for Middlesex, 252; supports the Chandos clause, 339; long speech of, 342; protests against a Tory Reform Bill, 429; proposes Mr. Littleton as Speaker, 450; diminished influence of, 454; motion for abolition of naval and military sinecures, 457, 458; dissatisfied with the Budget, 460; urges Lord Spencer (Viscount Althorp) to return to politics, 530; replied to, 531; allusions to, 242, 255.
Hunt, Mr. Henry, 196, 396.

Huskisson, Right Hon. William, Liberal views of, 202—204; in the Cabinet, 208; supported by Lord Althorp, 212; makes Lord Althorp chairman of finance committee, 221; speech on depreciation of the currency, 240; ill-health of, 273 *n.*; allusions to, 228 *n.*, 234 *n.*, 237, 277.

Income Tax, Lord Althorp in favour of, 238, 273; Mr. Brougham against, 239; had been imposed by Mr. Pitt, 277, 283.
Ingilby, Sir William, 461.
Inglis, Right Hon. Sir Robert, 299, 300, 310 *n.*, 432.
Insolvent Debtors' Bill, brought forward by Lord Althorp, 182, 186; carried, 184; thrown out in House of Lords, 185; adopted, 185.
Ireland, discontent in, 287, 288, 445, 451.
Irish Church, motion against, 487; adjourned debate on, 488; commission on, 491; Appropriation question fatal to Sir Robert Peel's Government, 537.
Irish Church Bill, brought forward by Lord Althorp, 453; success of the Bill, 454; Appropriation clause struck out in committee, 471; second reading carried in House of Lords, 475.
Irish Coercion Bill, first reading of, 455; passed with modifications, 475; difference of opinion in the Cabinet respecting, 497; is read the first time in House of Lords, 500; carried, 519.
(See Littleton and Althorp.)

Jeffrey, Right Hon. Francis (afterwards Lord (of Session) Jeffrey), admiration for Lord Althorp, 272; interview with Lord Althorp, 421; takes charge of Scotch Reform Bill, 437.
Jenkinson, Hon. Robert Banks (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), maiden speech of, 177, 178. (See Liverpool.)
Jenner, Sir Herbert, 390.
Jones, Mr. Gale, 128, 129.
———, Sir William, xix. *n.*, 1, 6, 7.
———, Lady, xviii., xix. *n.*
Joy, Mr. Hall, 224.

Kennedy, Right Hon. T. F., 544 *n.*
Kent, H.R.H. the Duchess of, 253.
Key, Sir John, 462.
Knatchbull, Right Hon. Sir Edward, 261.
Knightley, Sir Charles, 143, 144, 328, 443.
Knighton, Sir William, 200, 217 *n.*

Labouchere, Right Hon. Henry (afterwards Lord Taunton), his opinion of Lord Bessborough, 52; in communication with Sir George Murray, 229 *n.*, 232; his praise of Lord Althorp, 343.
Langham, Sir William, 88.
Lansdowne, Marquis of, enters Mr. Canning's Cabinet, 216; consulted by Lord Grey, 259, 263, 264; differs from Lord Grey respecting a creation of peers, 385, 403; from Lord Althorp, 403; disapproves of Ministerial appointments, 488; allusions to, 27, 99, 108, 224, 226, 275 *n.*, 335, 386. (See Petty.)
Lascelles, Hon. E., 89.
Lawley, Sir Francis, 244.
Leach, Right Hon. Sir John, 62, 93, 425.
Lefevre, Mr. Shaw, 108.

Lefevre, Sir John Shaw, 542.
Leicester, Earl of, 545.
Le Marchant, Sir Denis, principal Secretary to the Lord Chancellor, 268; notes of, 309 *n.*, 310 *n.*; alluded to, 382 *n.*, 476 *n.*, 548 *n.*
Leslie, Hon. Henry (afterwards Sir Henry Leslie), 70.
Letters from Lord Althorp to Lord Spencer, from Harrow, 36—42; on the Duke of York's trial, 106—109; on Lord Folkestone's motion, 125; respecting Coalition Ministry, 222—227; on the state of public affairs, 231, 288, 323—330; during progress of Reform Bill, 337, 340, 344, 354, 355, 374; respecting Irish Church Bill, 473.
Littleton, Right Hon. Edward (afterwards Lord Hatherton), commends Lord Althorp's management of Insolvent Debtors' Bill, 184; proposed as Speaker by Mr. Hume, 450; writes to Lord Wellesley respecting Irish Coercion Bill, 494; interview with Mr. O'Connell, 496; speech of, 501; tenders his resignation, 502; resignation not accepted, 504; defended by Lord Althorp, 504; his speech alluded to by Lord Althorp, 506; protests against Lord Althorp's resignation, 507, 508; statement in Parliament respecting him by Lord Althorp, 509; returns to office under Lord Melbourne, 518. (See Irish Coercion Bill.)
Liverpool, Earl of, declining health of, 207; death of, 213; alluded to, 194, 208 *n.*, 209, 228. (See Jenkinson).
Local Courts Bill, brought forward by Lord Althorp, 189; features of, 190—192; withdrawn, 193; vainly advocated by Mr. Peel, 194; by Lord Brougham, 195.
Lowther, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Lonsdale), 297.
Lushington, Right Hon. Stephen, 390, 392, 443, 482.
Lyndhurst, Lord, speech against Reform, 350, 351 *n.*; remark to Mr. Bonham Carter, 393; moves amendment for postponement of disfranchising clauses, 418; expects to return to office, 425; alluded to, 62, 66, 261, 289 *n.*
Lyttelton, Lady, marriage, 154; governess to the Royal children, 559 *n.*; letter on Lord Althorp's death, 562; alluded to, 561.
Lyttelton, Hon. Spencer, 561.

Macaulay, Right Hon. T. B. (afterwards Lord Macaulay), admiration of Mr. Gordon's speeches, 242; speeches on Reform Bill, 302, 327; speech on vote of confidence, 356; vindicates Whig policy, 382; remark on Lord Grey's speech, 418; speech on Lord Ebrington's address, 428; speech of, 431; remark on English antipathy to Roman Catholics, 448; alluded to, 227 *n.*, 398 *n.*
Macdonald, Mr. James, 211.
Mackintosh, Right Hon. Sir James, 165, 188, 328 *n.*
Mallet, Mr., 344 *n.*
Manners Sutton, Right Hon. Sir Charles (afterwards Viscount Canterbury), 449, 530, 532.
Mansel, Dr., Bishop of Bristol, 71, 72, 73.
March, Earl of (afterwards Duke of Queensberry), 5.
Marlborough, Duchess of, 88.
Marsden, Mr., 10.
Maynooth College Bill, supported by Lord Spencer, 560.
Melbourne, Viscount, remark on the franchise, 294; agrees with Lord

Grey respecting Irish Coercion Bill, 496; Premier, 518, 538, 551; letters to Lord Althorp, 522, 524; interview with the King, 523; urges Lord Spencer to return to office, 538, 552; alluded to, 27, 63 *n.*, 260 *n.*, 386, 480, 528, 530, 532, 535.
Melville, Viscount, 116, 120, 132.
Mildmay, Sir Henry, 98, 108.
Mill, Mr. James, 420.
Milton, Viscount (afterwards Earl Fitzwilliam), brings forward vote of censure, 132—134; returned for Northamptonshire, 317; speech on the Corn Laws, 323; moves amendments to Reform Bill, 341; alluded to, 89, 107, 215, 226, 328.
Morpeth, Viscount (afterwards Earl of Carlisle), letter to Lord Althorp on the state of public feeling, 447; moves nomination of Mr. Manners Sutton to the Speakership, 450; alluded to, 108.
Mortier, Marshal, 151.
Mulgrave, Earl of (afterwards Marquis of Normanby), 487.
Murray, Right Hon. Sir George, Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, 229, 232; speech on Catholic question, 230; on Lord Ebrington's question, 431.

Negro Emancipation, feeling in the country for, 448; brought forward in Parliament, 470, 471.
Nelson, Earl, 20.
Newcastle, Duke of, 51.
Nugent, Lord, 211.

O'Connell, Mr. Daniel, agitates in Ireland, 287; is arrested, 288; praises Irish Church Bill, 453; speech on Irish Coercion Bill, 456; comments on Irish Church Bill, 475; opposes Irish Church Commission, 491; conversation with Mr. Littleton, 495; line of conduct respecting Coercion Bill, 495—514; alluded to, 326, 472, 478, 487, 493, 568 *n.*
(See Irish Coercion Bill.)
Ord, Mr. William, 126, 224.
Ossulston, Lord (afterwards Earl of Tankerville), 108, 126. (See Tankerville.)

Paganini, Signor, 325, 329.
Palmer, Mr. Horsley, remark on transfer duty, 274; sanguine respecting Reform Bill, 373; attachment to Lord Althorp, 468.
Palmerston, Viscount, defeated for University of Cambridge, 87; yields the leadership of the House to Lord Althorp, 260; able speech of, 392; alluded to, 386.
Parke, Right Hon. Sir James (afterwards Lord Wensleydale), 78.
Parkes, Mr. J. G., 251 *n.*, 368, 369 *n.*
Parnell, Right Hon. Sir H., chairman of finance committee, 221; moves amendment, 256; dissatisfaction of, 271; alluded to, 239 *n.*
Peel, Right Hon. Sir Robert, introduces Bill for recovery of small debts, 194, 195; his opinion of Lord Bathurst, 215 *n.*; Catholic Emancipation Bill, 229; income tax carried by, 239; fear of a revolution, 255; in favour of direct taxation, 273; speeches on the Budget, 281, 282, 285; financial views of, 286; opposes Reform Bill, 328 *n.*, 337, 357, 358, 379, 381, 383, 387; admits necessity of Reform, 302; indignant speech of, 307; recommends moderation, 320; tribute to Lord Althorp, 343; replied to by Lord Althorp,

357; attacks Whig Ministry, 376; attacked by Mr. Macaulay, 382; speeches on the franchise, 395, 397; cold reception in the House, 424; speech on Lord Ebrington's motion, 428; refuses to take office under Duke of Wellington, 430; approves of Lord Althorp's Budgets, 441, 460; defeats motion for depreciation of the currency, 458; opposes establishment of bank notes as legal tender, 469; liberal speech of, 491; defends the King's dismissal of Lord Melbourne, 536; defeated on Lord Howick's amendment, 537; abolishes the Corn Laws, 556; remark respecting Lord Althorp, 566; allusions to, 166, 218 *n.*, 222, 224, 242, 245, 248, 251, 277 *n.*, 298, 299 *n.*, 309—311 *n.*, 332, 376, 399, 492, 505.

Peers, creation of, proposed, 369, 385; Lord Althorp's letter to Lord Grey respecting, 370; to Lord Spencer, 374; Lord Grey's letter to Lord Althorp concerning, 386; thought needful by Lord Althorp, 403; urged by Lord Althorp on Lord Grey, 403—406; objected to by Lord Grey, 407—413; discussed by Lord Althorp and Mr. Francis Baring, 415—417; Cabinet unanimous for, 419; refused by the King, 422.

Pendarves, Mr., 244, 313, 399, 430.

Pepys, Right Hon. Sir Charles Christopher (afterwards Earl of Cottenham), at Harrow with Lord Althorp, 58—60; in Parliament, 61; Lord Chancellor, 63; character of, 63—68; alluded to, 391.

Pepys, Dr., Bishop of Worcester, 33, 35, 59 *n.*

Pepys, Sir William, 59 *n.*

Perceval, Right Hon. Spencer, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 90; defends the Duke of York, 97, 99, 100, 104, 112 *n.*, 132, 133; speech on Lord Folkestone's motion, 125.

Perceval, Mr., 388.

Petty, Lord Henry (afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne), member for Cambridge University, 87, 88; friendship with Lord Althorp, 110; speech on Lord Folkestone's motion, 125. (See Lansdowne.)

Pigott, Sir Arthur, 93.

Pitt, Right Hon. William, supported by Lord Spencer, 86, 111; imposed income tax, 277, 283; alluded to, xvii., 21, 23, 80, 116, 294, 417.

Pollock, Mr. (afterwards Sir Frederick Pollock), 394.

Ponsonby, Hon. Frederick, 54.

Ponsonby, Hon. George, leader of the Opposition, 179 *n.*; alluded to, 213.

Ponsonby, Hon. William (afterwards Lord de Mauley), 53. (See de Mauley.)

Poor Law Bill, prepared by Lord Brougham and Lord Althorp, 483, 484; carried, 485.

Portland, Duke of, 90.

Portman, Mr. E. B. (afterwards Lord Portman), 243.

Powys, Hon. and Rev. Frederick, 69.

Powys, Hon. and Rev. Littleton, 70.

Poyntz, Mr., 2.

Prince Consort, H.R.H. the, 559.

Pryme, Mr., 78.

Pytchley Hunt, the, 142—146.

Queensberry, Duchess of, 27, 28 *n.*

Radical Party, the, rise of, 111, 114, 115, 123; members of, 115—122; led by Mr. Whitbread, 126, 127.

Redesdale, Lord, 192.

Reform in Parliament, desired both by

Lord Spencer and Lord Althorp, 113; by Radical Party in the House of Commons, 114, 165; causes a rupture between Mr. Whitbread and the Whig leaders, 126; foreseen by Mr. Canning, 210; agreed to be left in abeyance by Coalition Ministry, 214; prevents Lord Althorp from joining Coalition, 216; taken up by Birmingham Political Union, 251; general feeling for, throughout the country, 252; question of, raised in Parliament by Lords Grey and Althorp, 253, 254; declaration of the Duke of Wellington against, 253, 256; suggested as basis of a new Coalition, 261; Lord Althorp's only inducement to remain in office, 290; doubtful feeling in favour of, among the higher classes, 296; enthusiasm for, in the large towns, 302; not a party question with the Whigs at first, 308 *n.*; zeal for, in Northamptonshire, 316; most popular with the public, 346; has few supporters among the Peers, 349; resolution in favour of, 360; address in favour of, 426; discussions on, in House of Commons, 428; carried, 436; alluded to, 218, 269. (See Grey and Althorp.)

Reform Bill (First) agreed on by a Committee of the Cabinet, 292; details of, 294; discussion of, by the Cabinet, 294; settled by Mr. Adam and Mr. Stephenson, 296; brought forward by Lord John Russell, 297; debate on, 298, 302, 303; second reading carried, 304; General Gascoigne's amendment, 304; majority for the Opposition and rejection of the Bill, 305.

Reform Bill (Second) brought forward by Lord John Russell, 322; second reading passed, 323; committal of, 330; debate on, 330; successive motions for adjournment, 332; debate on Schedules A. and B., 335; managed entirely by Lord Althorp, 335; debate on Schedules C., D. and E., 337; the Chandos clause, 339; freeman's abolition clause, 344; read a third time, 345; debate on second reading in House of Lords, 349; its rejection, 352.

Reform Bill (Third) brought forward by Lord John Russell, 378; opposed by Sir Robert Peel, 379; read a second time, 384; committal of, 387, 393—396; household franchise, 396; Mr. Sheil's motion, 396; read a third time, 400; taken up to House of Lords, 414; read a second time, 416; Lord Lyndhurst's amendment, 418; amendment carried, 419; secession of Tory Peers, 435; third reading carried, 436; Royal assent given, 436. (See Grey and Althorp.)

Reform Bill, Irish, 437.

Reform Bill, Scotch, 437.

Ricardo, Mr., 202, 205, 277.

Richmond, Duke of, asked to join Lord Grey's Government, 261; at Wiseton, 444; interest in farming, 544.

Robinson, Hon. Frederick John (afterwards Viscount Goderich, and Earl of Ripon), 44, 70, 208. (See Goderich.)

Roebuck, Mr., 278, 331, 334, 393, 397.

Romilly, Sir Samuel, supports Colonel Wardle's motion, 99; praise of Lord Folkestone's speech, 100, 119; relations with Mr. Whitbread, 111, 114; allusions to, 97, 165, 188.

Royston, Viscount, at Harrow with Lord Althorp, 54; travels in Russia, 56, 57; death of, 58; literary attainments of, 58 *n.*

Russell, Lord John (afterwards Earl Russell), friendship with Lady Spencer, 21; carries Repeal of Test

and Corporation Act, 229; consulted by Lord Althorp, 245; prepares Reform Bill, 292; introduces Bill, 297—300, 309 *n.*, 310 *n.*; moves committal of Bill, 304; returned for Devonshire, 313; intimacy with Lord Althorp, 320; brings forward second Reform Bill, 322, 323; moves committal of Bill, 330; Lord Althorp's co-operation with, 335; speaks on enfranchisement clauses, 337; on freeman's abolition clause, 344; takes Reform Bill to House of Lords, 345; at Reform dinner, 346; receives thanks of Birmingham Political Union, 361; reply, 362; brings forward third Reform Bill, 378; takes up Bill to House of Lords, 414; speaks on Lord Ebrington's question, 431; has charge of Boundary Bill, 437; his speech in debate on Mr. Ward's adjourned motion, 487; mention of Lord Althorp in his Recollections, 515; suggested to the King as Leader of the House of Commons, 524; letter to Lord Althorp on dismissal of Whig Ministry, 525; letter against Protection, 556; allusions to, 52, 308 *n.* (See Reform Bill.)

Russell, Lord William, 98.

Scarlett, Right Hon. Sir James (afterwards Lord Abinger), 394.

Sebright, Sir John, 98, 108, 299.

Sefton, Earl of, 235.

Senior, Mr., 483 *n.*

Shaw, Dr., 77.

Sheil, Right Hon. Richard, his opinion of Mr. Macaulay, 382 *n.*; speeches on Reform Bill, 396—399; taxed with dissimulation by Lord Althorp, 479; eloquence of, 480 *n.*

Shelburne, Earl of (afterwards Marquis of Lansdowne), 22, 44.

Shepherd, Rev. Thomas, 160.

Sheridan, Right Hon. Richard Brinsley, 12, 24, 177.

Sidmouth, Viscount, 164, 209, 213 *n.*

Speaker of the House of Commons, election of, 449, 529.

Spencer, John, (first) Earl, xviii., xix., 1—5.

Spencer, Margaret Georgiana, Countess, xx., 2—6.

Spencer, George John, (second) Earl, his birth and education, 6, 7; political career of, 8, 12; naval administration of, 9—11; resigns on Catholic question, 12; interest in agriculture, 13, 14; in literature, 15—17; literary friends of, 17; marriage, 18; guests at Spencer House, 19—21; Home Secretary, 88; retirement from politics, 91; friendship with Mr. Fox, 111; views on Reform, 113; hospitality of, 142; supports Coalition Ministry, 219; letter to Lord Althorp on Appropriation question, 492, declining health of, 519; death, 520; allusions to, xvii., 29, 30—32, 35, 71, 86, 96.

Spencer, Lavinia, Countess, her character and attainments, 18—21; incites her son to study, 76, 78; remark to Lord Milton, 134; asks Sir Henry Hardinge to join Lord Grey's Government, 230; alluded to, xviii., 272.

Spencer, John Charles, (third) Earl, withdraws from politics, 529; letters respecting Mr. Abercromby's election to the Speakership, 530—532; residence at Wiseton Hall, 542—544; Royal Agricultural Society, 545; interest in farming, 546, 558; philosophical studies, 547; correspondence with Lord Brougham, 548

—550; refuses Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland and Government of Canada, 550, 552; speaks on Free Trade, 554—557; on Maynooth College Bill, 560; illness, 562; death, 563; character, 567, 568. (See Althorp, Visct.)
Spencer, Captain the Hon. Sir Robert Cavendish, 35 *n.*, 148; distinguished naval career of, 152—154, 220, 221; false report of his death, 219; private secretary to Duke of Clarence, 219; named Surveyor-General of the Ordnance, 264; sudden illness and death, 266.
Spencer, Admiral the Hon. Frederick (afterwards (fourth) Earl Spencer), 559, 562.
Spencer, Hon. and Rev. George, 154, 266.
Spencer, Lady Georgiana, 154.
Spring Rice, Right Hon. Thomas (afterwards Lord Monteagle), differs from Lord Althorp respecting income-tax, 239; speech on the Budget, 464; in Lord Grey's Cabinet, 489; letter to, from Lord Althorp, 539; alluded to, 381.
Stanley, Right Hon. Edward (afterwards Earl of Derby), moves renewal of Irish Arms Bill, 326; refutes Mr. Croker, 383; rebukes Sir Robert Peel, 397; speech at Brooks's, 429; has charge of Irish Reform Bill, 437; prepares Coercion Bill and Church Temporalities Bill, 445; influence with Lord Grey, 452; speech on Coercion Bill, 455, 456; brings forward Negro Emancipation Bill, 471; resigns, 488; writes to Lord Lansdowne, 489; conservative speech of, 491; allusions to, 212, 229 *n.*, 287, 399, 471, 472, 487.
Stephenson, Mr., 296.
Strickland, Sir George, 433, 448.
Strutt, Right Hon. Edward (afterwards Lord Belper), seconds Lord Ebrington's Address, 426.
Sugden, Right Hon. Sir Edward (afterwards Lord St. Leonards), 195 *n.*, 248; remark on Whig Budget, 281; opposes Reform Bill, 335, 338, 394; speech on Lord Ebrington's question, 431.
Sunderland, Earl of, 15.
Sussex, H.R.H. the Duke of, 324 *n.*, 436.

TANKERVILLE, Earl of, 185.
Tavistock, Marquis of (afterwards Duke of Bedford), 215; friendship with Lord Althorp, 226, 257, 258, 259 *n.*; letter to Lord Althorp on defeat of Tory Ministry, 537; alluded to, 518.
Taylor, Sir Herbert, 434, 435 *n.*, 568 *n.*
Test and Corporation Act, repeal of, left in abeyance by Coalition Ministry, 214; carried by Lord John Russell, 229.
Thompson, Alderman, 301, 302 *n.*
Thomson, Right Hon. Charles Poulett (afterwards Lord Sydenham) brings forward motion for reduction in public expenditure, 237; Vice-President of the Board of Trade, 263; views on taxation, 274; letter to Lord Althorp, 565; allusions to, 239 *n.*, 273 *n.*, 282, 284, 286.
Thomson, Mr. Andrew, 237 *n.*
Thornton, Mr. Henry, 135.
Tierney, Right Hon. George, speech on Colonel Wardle's motion, 99; speech on Lord Folkestone's motion, 125; chosen leader of Whig party, 213 *n.*; enters Mr. Canning's Cabinet, 216; alluded to, 108, 137.
Trimmer, Mrs., 6.
Turton, Sir Thomas, 107, 108.

Villiers, Mr. Hyde, 467.
Vyvyan, Sir Richard, 307 *n.*, 337, 338.

Walpole, Right Hon. Sir Robert (afterwards Earl of Orford), 543.
Ward, Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry Ward), 487, 488.
Wardle, Colonel, motion of, against the Duke of York, 94, 95, 97—99, 106—108; his proceedings disapproved, 130, 133; alluded to, 112 *n.*, 132.
Wellesley, Marquis of, correspondence with Lord Grey on Irish Coercion Bill, 494, 497, 498; communicated with by Mr. Littleton, 494, 505 *n.*; by Lord Brougham, 511; alluded to, 513 *n.*
Wellington, Duke of, makes Sir Henry Parnell chairman of finance committee, 221; declaration against Reform, 253; resigns office, 259; economical measures of, 269; determined opposition to Reform, 349; letter respecting Birmingham Union, 367; angry remarks, 417; attempts to form a Government, 428, 432; censured by Lord Ebrington, 430; supports Poor Law Bill, 485; Premier, 524; allusions to, 26, 473, 517.
West, Mr., 69.
Wetherell, Sir Charles, opposes Reform Bill, 302, 328, 335, 339, 342, 387, 394; speaks on Lord Ebrington's motion, 356; alluded to, 200, 306, 333, 377.
Wharncliffe, Lord, 229 *n.*; proposes compromise on Reform question, 377; speech in favour of Reform Bill, 414; speech in answer to Duke of Wellington, 418; alluded to, 404.
Whitbread, Mr. William, takes prominent part in proceedings against the Duke of York, 95, 98—101; praise of Lord Althorp's speech, 103; democratic views of, 111, 114; character of, 115—118; speech on Lord Folkestone's motion, 125; leads Radical party, 126—128; friendship with Lord Althorp, 128, 129; indignant at the Duke of York's reappointment, 131; speech on Lord Milton's motion, 134; death, 162, 163; sketch of his life, 172—180.
Whitmore, Mr. Wolryche, 202—205.
Wickham, Mr. Henry, 329.
Wilberforce, Mr. William, 97, 200.
William IV., favourable to the Whigs, 246; dissolves Parliament on rejection of Reform Bill, 305, 306; view on Reform question, 407; dismisses Whig Ministry, 422; letter to Tory Peers, 434; attacked in the newspapers, 437; opposed to the Tories, 440; his letters to Lord Althorp, 464, 471, 568 *n.*; yields to Negro Emancipation Bill, 470; dismisses Lord Melbourne's Ministry, 524, 526; allusions to, 219, 223, 225, 227, 270, 376, 385, 425, 481 *n.*
Wilmot, Sir Eardley, 69.
Windham, Right Hon. William, 93, 108, 118, 119, 177.
Wiseton Hall, Lord Althorp's residence at, 155—161, 249, 443, 542; farm at, 557.
Wood, Right Hon. Sir Charles (afterwards Viscount Halifax), 523.
Wood, Alderman (afterwards Sir Matthew Wood), 325.
Wrottesley, Sir John (afterwards Lord Wrottesley), 462 *n.*
Wyndham, Sir William, 24.
Wynford, Lord, 393.
Wynn, Right Hon. Charles, joins in proceedings against the Duke of York, 98, 108, 134; esteem for Lord Althorp, 343; remark to Mr. William Brougham, 472; alluded to, 225.

Wynn, Sir Watkin, 98, 108.

York, H.R.H. the Duke of, trial of, 92—104; character of, 104, 105; Lord Althorp's letters concerning, 106—109; reinstated at the Horse Guards, 130, 131; Lord Milton's motion of censure, 132—135; alluded to, 112 *n.*, 116, 119, 126.

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